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IT WAS FAN WHO TALKED MOST WITH HIM AND WHO ASKED HIM HIS NAME.—*Dr. Hathern's Daughters, Page* 25.

Doctor Hathern's Daughters

BY

MARY J. HOLMES

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Dr. Hathern's Daughters.

PREFACE.

In a large, old fashioned Virginia house, shaded with elms and covered with climbing roses, honey-suckle and Virginia creepers, two women sat one June morning, discussing the practicability of writing a story in four parts and calling it "Dr. Hathern's Daughters." One of the daughters was to write the opening chapters, and was to be followed at intervals by her friend, whose sobriquet was to be "The Author." The story has been written and is now given to the public as the joint production of Annie Hathern and

THE AUTHOR.

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DR. HATHERN'S DAUGHTERS.

PART I—LIFE AT THE ELMS.

Chapter I—Annie's Story.

THE DAUGHTERS.

THERE are three of us, Fanny and Annie (that is myself) and Katy, who is our half-sister and several years our junior. Her mother, a blue-eyed, golden-haired little woman from New Orleans, lived only a year after she came to us, and just before she died she took my sister's hand and mine, and putting one of her baby's between them, said, "Be kind to her as I would have been kind to you had I lived. God bless you all."

We were only nine years old, but we accepted the trust as something sacred, and little Katy, who inherited all of her mother's marvelous beauty and sweetness of disposition, never missed a mother's love and care, and was the pet and darling of our household. Fanny and I are twins,—familiarly known as "Fan-and-Ann,"—and as unlike each other as it is possible for twins to be. Fan, who always passes for the elder, is half a head taller than I am, and very beautiful, with a stateliness and imperiousness of manner which would befit a queen, while I am shy

and reticent and small, and only one has ever called me handsome. But his opinion is more to me than all the world, and so I am content, although as a young girl, I used sometimes to envy Fan her beauty, and think I would rather be known as "the pretty and proud Miss Hathern" than "the plain and good one," a distinction often made between us, and one which I knew made me the more popular of the two.

Our home, which was sometimes called "The Elms," on account of the great number of elm trees around it, was in the part of Virginia that felt the shock of the war the most, and when the thunder of artillery was shaking the hills around Petersburg and the air was black with shot and shell and the gutters ran red with human blood, Fanny and I, with little Katy between us, sat with blanched faces listening to the distant roar,—she thinking of the cause she had so much at heart and feared was lost, and I of the thousands of homes made desolate by the dreadful war which, it seemed to me, need never to have been. As we were southern born we naturally sympathized with the south,—that is, Fanny did,—while our father, who was born under the shadow of Bunker Hill, and rarely had any very decided opinions except for peace and good will everywhere, scarcely knew on which side he did stand. Both were right and both were wrong, he said, and he opposed secession with all his might, insisting that there must be some better method of settling the difficulty than by plunging the nation into a sea of carnage.

He was for "peace at any price," and held the flag as a sacred thing, and at last when war was upon us, he reverently laid away in the garret the one with which we were wont to celebrate the Fourth of July, and night and morning prayed for both sides,—not that either might be

victorious, but that they might settle the difficulty amicably and go home.

My mother, whom I can scarcely remember, was a Charlestonian, who believed in slavery as a divine institution, and was the kindest and gentlest of mistresses to the few negroes she brought with her to her Virginia home. For myself I scarcely knew what I did believe, except as I was swayed by a stronger spirit than my own, and that spirit was Fan's. She was an out and out rebel, as we were called, and lamented that instead of a girl of thirteen she was not a man to join the first company of volunteers which went from Lovering. Situated as we were, near the frontier, we were fair prey for the soldiers on both sides, and they came upon us like the locusts of Egypt and spoiled us almost as badly as the Egyptians were spoiled by the Israelites, but from neither north nor south did we ever suffer a personal indignity. This was largely owing to our father's incomparable tact in dealing with them. It seemed to me that he was always watching for them, and when he came in from the street, or the gate where he spent a great deal of his time, I could tell to a certainty whether we were to expect a Federal or a Confederate before he spoke a word. If it were the latter he came to me and said, "Annie, there are soldiers in town and if they come here, as they may, stay in your room until they are gone." If it were the boys in blue, he went to Fan, but did not tell her to stay in her room. He knew she would not if he did, and he would say in his most conciliatory way, "Daughter, I think there are some Federals in the woods, and if they come here as they may because the house is large and handy, try and be civil to them, and don't be afraid."

"Afraid!" Fan would answer, with a flash in her black

eyes. "Do you think I would be afraid if the entire northern army stood at our door!"

Then she would hurry off to warn the blacks in the kitchen and see that the coffee and sugar and tea were hidden away, while father walked down to the gate to receive the foremost of his unwelcome guests. With a courtly wave of the hand, which he might have borrowed from kings, he would say, "What can I do for you to-day? I suppose you are hungry, but we have been visited so often that we have not much left. Still I think we can give you something; but, gentlemen, I beg of you not to annoy or frighten my daughters. They are very young and their mother is dead."

Whether it was what he said, or the way he said it, or both, his wishes so far as we were concerned were respected, and neither Fanny nor I ever came near a boy in blue or a boy in grey that he did not touch his cap to us, and when Fan's sharp tongue got the better of her, as it often did, they only laughed, and told her to "dry up," a bit of slang she did not then understand and resented hotly as a Yankee insult. They took our poultry and eggs and fruit and flour and finally all our negroes, except Phyllis, who had her bundle made up to go, and then found that her love for "Ole Mas'r" and the young "misseses" was stronger than her love for freedom.

On one occasion they took Black Beauty, Fan's riding pony, but sent it back within a few hours. This was toward the close of the war, when Virginia was full of Federal troops, and for one day and night our place was turned into a kind of barracks by a company whose leader, Col. Errington, occupied our best room and took his meals with us. He was a tall, handsome man, with a splendid physique and the most polished manners I ever saw. But

there was a cynical look about his mouth and a cold, hard expression in his grey eyes, which I did not like, while Fan detested him. She was then a beautiful girl of nearly seventeen, with a haughty bearing and frankness of speech which amused the northern officer, to whom she expressed her mind very freely, not only with regard to his calling, but also with regard to himself. But he took it all good-humoredly, and when he went away he kissed his hand to her, while to me he simply bowed.

"The wretch! How dare he!" Fanny said, with a stamp of her foot.

But she watched him until he disappeared from sight in the woods, through which there was a short cut in the direction of Petersburg. Most of his men followed him, but a few stragglers lingered behind for the sake of whatever they could find in the shape of eatables, and when at last they departed, Phyllis, who had been doing battle with them over a quantity of butternuts which she claimed as her special property, came running to the house with the startling information that "one dem blue-coats done took off Miss Fanny's pony, who kicked and snorted jes 's if he knowed 'twas a fetched Yank who had cotched him."

Rushing to the door we saw the pony going down the lane, or rather standing in the lane, for he had planted his forefeet firmly on the ground, and with mulish obstinacy refused to move. A sharp cut from the whip, however, brought him to terms, and he went galloping off with his heels in the air quite as often as upon terra firma. I think Fan followed him bare-headed for nearly a mile, but all her calls and entreaties were in vain. Black Beauty was gone, and she cried herself into a headache which lasted until night, when, just as we were sitting down to

supper, Phyllis came near dropping the hot corn cakes she was putting upon the table in her surprise and delight as she exclaimed, "Bress de Lord, dar's Black Beauty now."

Looking from the window we saw a soldier in blue leading him toward the house and trying hard to hold him as he minced and pranced and shook his head in his delight to be home again. In a moment he was at the open door where he often came to be fed with sugar or cookies and Fan's arms were around his neck and she was talking to him as if he was human and could understand her, while he whinnied in reply and and rubbed his head against her face.

"Col. Errington sent you this with his compliments," the soldier said, handing a note to Fan, which was as follows:

"DEAR MISS HATHERN

"I have just learned of the abduction of your pony, and am very sorry for the anxiety it must have caused you. I am sure it is yours, as you ran so far after him, and for that reason I should like to keep him for myself. But honor compels me to send him back.

"Hoping that you will not add the sin of thieving to my other enormities and that in the near future we may meet as friends instead of foes,

"I am, yours very truly,

"GEORGE W. ERRINGTON."

Fan's first impulse, after reading this, was to tear it up, but she changed her mind, and I heard her tell Phyllis to give the soldier some supper, if he wanted it.

"I suppose the tramp is hungry; they always are," she said, apologetically, as her eyes wandered across the orchard to the enclosure on the hillside where, under the

pine trees, our boy in grey was lying, with a boy in blue beside him.

That night I saw Fan put Col. Errington's note in a little box on our dressing bureau, where she kept her few trinkets, but his name was not mentioned between us until after the fall of Richmond, when Jack Fullerton, our neighbor, who had been in the war and who knew about Fan's pony and the officer, whom he teasingly called Fan's Yankee, brought a Washington paper in which we read that Col. Errington, who was so severely wounded at Petersburg, was recovering rapidly and would soon be able to be moved into his house on Franklin Square.

"I suppose you are very glad that your gallant Colonel is getting well," Jack said, and Fan replied, "Of course I am. Do you think me a murderess that I want any man to die."

"I thought at one time you would like to exterminate the entire Federal army," Jack said, and Fan replied, "So I would, and I have no love for them now; but can't a body change some of his views?"

And, truly, Fan's views were greatly changed from what they were at the beginning of the war, to which time I must go back for a little and tell of the boy in grey and the boy in blue, who brought the change and who, though dead, have much to do with this story.

Chapter II—An Episode.

THE BOY IN GREY AND THE BOY IN BLUE.

I have written of Dr. Hathern's daughters, but have said nothing of his son, our brother Charlie, who was four years our senior and little more than a boy when the war broke out. Too young by far to join the army, father and I said. But Fan thought differently, and when the clouds of strife grew darker and denser and there were calls for more recruits she urged him on until at last he enlisted and we saw him with others march away on the Monday after the Easter of '62. How handsome he was in his new uniform, and how proud we were of him, he was so tall and straight, with such a sunny smile on his boyish face and in his laughing blue eyes.

"Bress de boy; he look like Sol'mon in all his best clos'," Phyllis said, regarding him admiringly when he put them on, "an' though I spec's I'se a mighty bad un seein' I'se a nigger and one of Linkum's folks, I hope he'll beat 'em sho'."

"Beat them! Of course we shall!" Fan said, putting her arms around Charlie's neck and laying a hand on the shoulder of Jack Fullerton, who had also enlisted. "Of course we shall beat them. The Northerners are all cowards. One or two battles will end the matter and you will come marching home covered with glory."

She was talking mostly to Jack, flashing upon him a look from her bright eyes which would have made a less brave man face the cannon's mouth. Jack had been my hero since my earliest remembrance, although I knew

that he preferred Fan, who was tall and fair and comely, while I was short and dark and homely. It was mainly owing to her influence that he had enlisted, and he was to dine with us that Easter Day as his father was dead and his mother, who was an invalid, was away at some springs. How bright we made the house with the lilies Charlie was so fond of, saying they made him think of his mother and the angels, and I never see one now, nor inhale its perfume, that it does not bring Charlie back to me as he was that last day at home when there were great bowls of them on the mantels and stands and dinner table, which was loaded with every delicacy Phyllis could devise. The rooms looked as if decked for a bridal, but they seemed like a funeral, we were all so sad, except Fan. She was in the wildest of spirits and talked of the next Easter when the war would be over, and Charlie with us again, wearing shoulder straps may be, or at all events covered with honor as a soldier who had done his duty.

"You are not going to be shot, but to shoot somebody," she said, patting him on his back. "And we'll trim the house up better than it is to-day, and Phyllis shall make her best plum pudding, and I shall be so proud of you," she added, throwing her arms around his neck, and kissing him lovingly.

The next morning he went away and we saw him marching by to the sound of the fife and drum, while I cried as if my heart would break, but Fanny stood upon the horse-block by the gate and sent kisses after him until a turn in the road hid him from our sight. We heard from him often during the summer, for many men from our county were in the same regiment, and so, from one and another and from himself word came to us that he was well and had as yet seen no actual fighting, though very

anxious to do so. Then the tone of his letters changed a little and he was not quite so ready to fight.

"I tell you what, Fan-and-Ann," he wrote, "the boys in blue are not such milksops as you think. I have seen quite a lot of 'em, and they are a pretty good sort after all, and they gave me tobacco and hard tack and a newspaper, and said they'd nothing against me personally, but they had enlisted to lick just such upstarts and were going to do it. I'd smile to see them."

"And so would I," Fan said, with the utmost scorn, "lick us indeed! I wish I were a man!"

She was growing more bitter every day, and when one evening Phyllis came to me privately and said there was a half-starved Federal soldier hiding in the corn-field, I did not dare tell Fan, but went to him with Phyllis after dark and carried him bread and milk and a blanket to cover him and an umbrella to shield him from the rain. The third day he went away and I never heard from him again until the war was over, when I received a badly written letter, directed wrong side up and signed James Josh, who thanked me for my kindness which he had never forgotten. I passed the letter to Fan, who surprised me by saying, "Yes, I knew all about it; I saw you steal off into the corn-field and saw you feeding that poor wretch, and only a thought of Charlie and what I'd wish someone to do for him kept me from giving notice that a Yankee was hiding in our field. I knew when he went away and saw you and Phyllis coddle him up with sandwiches and hoe cake and father's old coat, and you took me to task for flirting in front of the house with Jack Fullerton, who was home on a furlough, when I was really trying to keep him as long as possible so as to let your James Josh get out of the way."

Fanny was greatly softened at that time and not much like the fierce, outspoken girl who kept us up to fever heat during the second year of the war when the weeks and months dragged so slowly until at last it was winter and news came of the terrible battle of Fredericksburg, when the woods were filled with the dead and dying and the river ran red with blood. Three days after the battle they brought Charlie to us dead, with a bullet in his side and a look of perfect peace on his young face, smooth yet and fair as a girl's. Some of his friends had found him in the woods, and rather than leave him there had at the risk of their own lives managed to have him carried across the country until at the close of the third day he lay in our best room where so many lilies had been when he went away, but which now echoed to father's sobs and mine as we bent over our dead boy. Fan never shed a tear, but in a cold, hard voice told the men where to put the body, and then with a start, exclaimed, " what does this mean?" and she pointed to his uniform, which was not the grey he had worn away, but the blue she so hated, and which was much too small for him.

" Some thief exchanged with him, for see, there is no hole where the bullet struck him," she continued, looking at the coat which was stained with blood, but whole. "Phyllis, come here," she went on, while father and I sat dumb and helpless, " take off that garb of a dog and put his own clothes on him, his best ones, hanging in his room."

Phyllis obeyed, and when the soiled and bloody garments lay upon the floor, Fan said, " give me the tongs, I am going to burn them up."

Then father arose and reaching out his shaking hands saved the blue uniform from the flames.

"Wait, Fan," he said; "there may be something in the pockets which will tell us whose clothes they are. Remember there are more aching hearts than ours."

He was feeling in the trousers pockets where securely pinned in the bottom of one was the half sheet of paper which we had fastened in the top of Charlie's cap because it was too large. The paper was written over in a scrawly hand which was not Charlie's, and Fan read it aloud with the tears streaming down her cheeks, just as mine are falling now, as I copy it verbatim:

"DEAR FATHER AND FAN-AND-ANN:

"I am dying under a tree in the woods with a bullet in me and a boy's cap stuffed into the wound to keep the blood back, while I tell him what to write. Lucky Fan-and-Ann thought to put that paper in my cap. The boy, who is a Yankee, found me and brought me some water and covered me with his coat when I got cold and stuffed his cap into the hole and cried over me, and I cried too, and we've talked it over and are as sorry as we can be—about the war, I mean. I hope I didn't kill anybody and he hopes he didn't, and his left hand is almost shot away and hurts him awful, but he's going to stick to me till I'm dead. Then I've told him how to find his way to you and tell you about me, and you must take care of him and not let them get him. He don't want to go to prison, and I don't want to have him, and he 's going to change clothes with me so as to look like a confederate. We've said the Lord's Prayer together, and Now I lay me, and the Creed, and dearly beloved, and everything we could think of and he knows them just as I do and I reckon I'm all right with God, only I'd like to die at home. It's getting dark and the boy is tired and I am faint. Kiss little Katy for me. I wish I could see you all again.

"Good bye, be kind to the boy. Give my respects to Phyllis.

"CHARLIE."

This was the letter and I need not say that the blue uniform was not burned; neither did I know what became of it until after the funeral was over and I had courage to go into my brother's room where I found it hanging on the wall and over it the Stars and Stripes which Fan had brought from their hiding place and put above the faded blue, from which the blood stains could not be effaced, although Phyllis had washed it two or three times. Every day Fan and I went in and looked at it and cried over it and talked of *The Boy* and wondered who he was and when, if ever, he would come.

"What shall you do if he does?" I asked her once, but she only glared at me like a tiger and I was glad to escape from the scornful gleam of her eyes.

And thus the weeks glided into months and it was spring again and the Virginia woods were lovely in their dress of green; the robins were building their nests in the trees and the lilies we were to lay on Charlie's grave at Easter were just breaking into bloom. Father had gone to visit a patient, Katy was at school, and Fan and I sat by the dining-room fire when Phyllis came in, and, cautiously shutting the door, said in a mysterious whisper, "He's done come."

"Who has come?" I asked, and Phyllis replied, "The Boy, to be sho'; him you're spectin', honey, Mas'r Charles's boy, and oh, de Lord, such a bag of bones, and so scar't for fear he'll be took."

"Where is he?" Fan asked, springing to her feet.

"In my cabin, in course. Whar should he be?" was Phyllis's answer, and in a moment Fan and I were on our way to the cabin, the door of which we could not open.

"Go to the windy behine de cabin, honey," Phyllis said, puffing after us like an engine.

We went to the rear window, which was open, and through which Fan darted like a cat, while I followed almost as quickly. Against the door a most heterogenous mass of furniture was piled. A table, two wooden chairs, a wash-tub, iron kettle, stewpan, skillet and billet of wood, while a large nail was driven over the latch.

"What upon earth is this for. I should think you were shutting out an army," Fan said, and Phyllis, who had managed to squeeze through the window, replied, "An' so I is, de Federate's army, too. I'se not gwine to have him took, an' he beggin' of me not to; I'll spill my heart's blood first."

She had seized a big rolling pin which she flourished energetically, looking as if she might keep a whole regiment at bay.

"Move those things and open that door," Fan said authoritatively, and then we turned our attention to the boy, lying on Phyllis's bed, a mere skeleton, with masses of light curly hair and great sunken blue eyes which looked up at us so pitifully as we bent over him.

"You won't let 'em get me?" he whispered, with a faint smile, "I am so sick and my head aches so, and my hand is so bad. He said you were good, but I didn't know there were two of you; which is Fan-an-Ann?"

Fan and I looked curiously at each other a moment; then, remembering that Charlie always spoke of us as Fan-an-Ann, and that it was so written in the letter, we understood his mistake. But it was Fan who answered, for I could only stand and cry over this wreck of a boy, with Charlie's battered clothes upon him, too long and large every way, and covered with soil and blood stains. What remained of his left hand was bound in a dirty rag and quivered with pain as it lay on the coarse blanket.

"What shall we do?" I asked at last, and Fan answered in her imperious way, which always made one feel small.

"Do! Go to the house and get Charlie's bed ready, and bring me his dressing gown and a shirt and drawers from his trunk. This is no time to cry."

I knew then that Lee's entire army could not wrest that boy from Fan, who helped Phyllis remove his stiff garments and wash the aching limbs, scarcely larger than sticks, and who herself undid the bandage from the wounded hand which she bathed so carefully and bound up so skillfully in the lint and linen which I brought her; then, when all was done, she wrapped a blanket around him and took him in her own strong arms, not daring to trust him to Phyllis, who weighed a hundred and eighty and was apt to stumble. It was curious to see Fan, who had been so bitter against the north, carrying that Yankee boy up to the house and laying him on Charlie's bed, at the foot of which, on the wall, his own uniform was hanging. He saw it at once, for his eyes seemed to see everything, and with a smile on his white face, he said, "Why, there's my old clothes. They were too small for him but I managed to get them on him as he told me, and I pinned the letter in his pockets, thinking if he got to you and I didn't, you'd know; did you find it?"

"Yes," Fan answered, "and now tell me why you were so long in coming?"

He was very weak and could only talk at intervals in whispers, as he replied, "I lost the way and was sick in a negro's cabin ever so long. They took as good care of me as they could and hid me away when danger was near,—sometimes under the bed, and once in the pounding barrel, and once in the meal chest, where I was nearly smothered."

"Hid you from what?" Fan asked, and he replied, with a gleam in his blue eyes, "From the rebels, of course, don't you know I'm a Yank?"

"Yes; go on and tell us of Charlie," Fan said, a little sharply, and he went on very slowly and stopping sometimes with closed eyes, as if he were asleep.

"I was in the battle,—Fredericksburg, you know. It was awful. 'Twas the first I had really been in, and I was so scar't, and wanted to run away, but couldn't; when I got over it I guess I was crazy with the roar and shouts and yells from horses and dying men. Did you ever hear a thousand men scream in mortal pain?"

Fan shook her head and he continued: "It's awful, but the horses are the worst; I hear them now, I shall always hear them till I die."

He stopped and there came a look upon his face which we feared was death. But Fan bathed his forehead with eau-de-cologne and moistened his lips with water until he revived, and said, "Where did I leave off. Oh, yes, I know; till I die. I got over being scar't and fought like a bloodhound and wanted to kill them all. I am sorry now and hope I didn't kill any one. Do you think I did?"

Fan did not answer, and he continued: "When it was over, I got separated from our army somehow and wandered in the woods and cried, my hand ached so, and I was so cold and hungry. Then I heard somebody crying harder than I, or groaning like, and I hunted till I found him under a tree, all bloody and white. I knew he was a boy in grey, but I didn't care, nor he either; we was boys together, and I knelt down by him and told him I was sorry and asked what I could do."

"'Write to Fan-an-Ann,' he said, and I wrote it on a stone, and my hand hurt me so; we said some prayers

together, Our Father, and Now I lay me, and some more that we made up about forgiving us and going to Heaven; and he's all right and was awfully sorry about the war, and so am I, and when he got took in his head he talked of Easter and the lilies which you have then, and said he could smell them, and he said a good deal about Fan-an-Ann. And then I took his head in my lap and kissed him and he kissed me for his father and for Fan-an-Ann, and he said I was to tell her he was not afraid, for he was going to his mother, and then he died—Oh, yes, he said something about little Katy and kissing her. Don't cry, it makes me feel so bad;" and opening his great blue eyes he looked at Fan, down whose face the tears were running like rain, and who, stooping down, pressed her lips to those of the boy who had kissed our dying brother.

"Go on," she said softly, and he went on: "I changed clothes as he told me and prayed that his folks might find him and bring him to you and that I might get here, too, and not be taken prisoner, and I have, but the way was so long and hard and I am so tired and sick and sorry. You won't let them get me, sure?"

"Never!" and Fan made me think of some wild animal guarding its young, as she drew the sheet over the boy, whose mind began to wander and from whom we could extract but little more and that little was very unsatisfactory.

It was Fan who talked most with him and who asked him his name.

"My real one, or the one I had with the boys?" he said, and she replied, "your real one, so I can write to your mother."

There was a look of cunning in his bright eyes, as he replied, "I hain't no mother, except Aunt Martha, and

she won't care, and I don't want her to know. I ran away from her and enlisted after a while. I was *Joe* with the boys, but that ain't the name they gave me in baptism. Do you know the Apostles?"

"Yes."

'Well, I am one of them. Now guess," he said, and beginning with Matthew and ending with Paul Fan went over the entire list, but the expression of the boy's face never changed in the least; nor did he give any sign when she spoke his name, if she did speak it.

"Joe will do," he said. "Aunt Martha has washed her hands of me a good many times. She was always washing them. She don't mind whether I am Joe or an Apostle."

"But where is your home? Where does Aunt Martha live?" Fan asked, and he replied, "She don't live there now."

Evidently he did not care to talk of his home, which could not have been a very happy one, judging from what he did say. He called me *Ann-an-Fan*, while Fan was *Fan-an-Ann*, and his eyes brightened when she came near him, and he smiled upon her in a way which always brought the tears.

"You are just as good as northern folks," he said to her once, "and I am sorry I came down to lick you; I wish I had something to give you. Where are my trousers?" Phyllis had washed and ironed the ragged greys and put back in the pocket everything she found there—a jews-harp, a ball of twine, some nails, and a pearl handled knife with three blades, two of which were broken; this with the jews-harp he gave to Fan to remember him by, he said.

"Carlyle gave me the knife one Christmas, and I gave him a lead pencil. I couldn't get anything more, for I

hadn't any money. I'd been bad; I was always bad, and Aunt Martha wouldn't give me any," he said, and when Fan asked him who Carlyle was, he answered, "Oh, a boy I used to know and like. If you see him tell him so, and that I have never told that he took the cake, and wouldn't if I lived to be a hundred. Aunt Martha whaled me for it, and my, didn't she put it on; I was too big to be thrashed, and I ran away not long after that, and went to a grocery and then to the war, and she thinks now that I stole the cake!"

This was all we could possibly get from him, and we did not know how much reliance to put upon it, he was delirious so much of the time.

At first father thought to amputate his hand but finally gave that up. It was useless to torture him, he said, as he could not last long, and he did not. It was Monday evening when he came to us and he lingered for three days, sometimes sleeping quietly and sometimes raving about the war and Charlie and the long weary road he had traveled to reach us and Fan-an-Ann and Ann-an-Fan, clinging most to Fan, who watched him day and night as tenderly as if it had been Charlie instead of one of the race she had affected to hate. Once he seemed to be at his old home, and in fear of punishment, for he begged piteously of Aunt Martha to spare him from something, we could not tell what, and he asked us twice not to let her find him, saying he would not go back to her. Again he spoke of a little out of the way town in Maine which Fan wrote down for future reference. Everything about him was wrapped in mystery except the fact that he was there with us, the boy who had cared for our dying brother and for whom we cared to the last. When the morning of Good Friday dawned he sank into a stupor from

which we thought he would never awaken, but when the church bell rang for service he started up and opening his eyes said to Fan, "What's that? Is it Sunday and must I go to Sunday School? I hain't my lesson."

"It is Good Friday," Fan replied, and he continued: "Oh, yes; Good Friday, and Easter; I know. We had 'em down in Maine, and the lilies, too, that he told me about in the woods, and I once spoke a piece. Do you want to hear it?"

Fan nodded, and raising himself in bed, he began:

Softly now the Easter sunlight
Falls on Judea's wooded hills,
Shining redly through the tree tops,
Lighting up the running rills.
While all things in earth and heaven
Sing aloud with one acclaim
Glory in the highest, Glory,
Glory be to Jesus' name.

"There was a lot more, but I can't remember how it goes. Carlyle spoke a piece, too, and did first rate for a little shaver. I taught it to him, but 'twas hard work, as he'd rather play with Don,—that's the dog. Tell him good-bye, and good-bye Fan-an-Ann, and Ann-an-Fan. Queer that there's two of you. I don't believe he knew, but I'll tell him, and that they were good to me and didn't let 'em catch me. Now say 'Our Father,' for I am getting sleepy, and it is growing dark."

It was Fan who said it; I could not speak, for I saw the death pallor gather on the face of the boy, who repeated with Fan the familiar words.

"That makes it about square with me and Jesus, and I guess that he won't turn off a poor boy like me," he said, and then for a time he was back again at Fredericksburg, fighting like a little bear; then with Charlie in the woods

singing a low lullaby such as mothers sing to their restless infants; then in the meal chest and under the bed and in the pounding barrel, shivering with fear, and at last with Fan-an-Ann, who he said was a *brick*. Then he seemed to listen intently, and whispered, "Hark. Don't you hear the guns? how they bang away; and how red the river runs; and how fast the men go down! Oh, God, have pity on us all."

For a moment he lay quiet; then, rousing again, called out triumphantly, "The war is over; the victory is won; Hurrah for———." He meant to say "The boys in blue." He had said it often in his delirium, but something in Fan's eyes checked him, and after looking steadily at her an instant he raised his right arm in the air and called out in a clear, shrill voice, "Hurrah for Fan-an-Ann; three cheers and a tiger, too!" then the hand dropped upon his breast and The Boy was dead.

The neighbors for miles around had heard of him and many had come to us bringing delicacies and flowers and offering assistance, if it were needed. The aid Fan declined, but took the flowers and fruit to the boy, telling him who sent them.

"They are very kind," he said. "I guess I'm some reconstructed, though I am a Yank yet and stick to the flag. *Yes, sir!*"

Neither Fan nor I could repress a smile at the energy with which he asserted his loyalty to his cause, and neither liked him the less for it. Fan, too, must have been "some reconstructed," for she cared for him to the last as tenderly as if he had been her brother, and when he was dead, she with Phyllis made him ready for the grave, crying over him as she had not cried when Charlie died. Then her tears would not come, but now they fell in tor-

rents as she brushed his wavy hair, which had grown rather long and lay in soft rings about his forehead, giving him the look of a young girl, rather than a boy, whose age we could not guess. We cut off two or three of his curls and put them, with the letter he had written for Charlie, into the pocket of the blue uniform which, with the grey, we left hanging on the wall in Charlie's room.

We buried him on Easter day, and he had the largest funeral ever seen in the neighborhood, for everybody came, and his coffin, over which we hung the Federal flag, was heaped with lilies, which were afterwards dropped into his grave. Then we tried to find his friends, but with only Aunt Martha and Carlyle and the little town in Maine to guide us, it proved a fruitless task.

Fan wrote to the postmaster of the town in Maine, giving all the particulars, and after two months or more she received an answer from the postmaster's wife, who said that during the first year of the war a company had gone from an adjoining town and in it was a boy, who gave his name as Joseph Wilde. He was a comparative stranger in town and had been for a short time in the employ of a grocer, who spoke very highly of him. But where he came from no one knew, or if he had any friends. And that was all we could learn of "The Boy," whom we buried on the hillside beside our brother. At the head of his grave is a plain marble slab, and on it "The Boy, who died Good Friday, 1863." This was Fan's idea, and every Decoration Day after the war was over she used to hang the Stars and Bars over Charlie's grave and the Stars and Stripes over the grave of The Boy, who has slept there now for many a year and will sleep there until from the North and the South, the East and the West, the boys

in blue and the boys in grey will come together, a vast army, and what was crooked to them here will be made plain and we, who now see through a glass darkly, will then see face to face in the light of the Resurrection morning.

Chapter III.

AFTER THE WAR.

We had done our best to win and had failed. We were conquered, but in Lovering at least we accepted the situation and rejoiced for the peace and quiet which came to us with the disappearance of the soldiers from our soil. Even Fan was glad to go to bed feeling sure that her sleep would not be disturbed by the tramp of horses' feet or the clamor of hungry men for food and shelter. Our little town had been visited so often by both armies and levied on so frequently for means to carry on the war that its people were greatly impoverished. Whether it were that our house was larger and our accommodations generally more ample, or that our father's manner of receiving an unwelcome visitor was different from our neighbors, we seemed to have suffered most. Our horses and cows and sheep were gone. Our negroes were gone with the exception of Phyllis, who, after her first attempt to leave, stood firmly by us, refusing wages after she knew she was free.

Only poor white truck work for pay, and she wasn't one of them, she said.

Our timber was damaged for the soldiers had cut down the trees in our woods for their camp fires, and worst of all our father's patients were mostly gone. Belonging to the old school, in which he believed as he did in his religion, he adhered strictly to his morphine and calomel, and when a young physician from Richmond opened an office

in town, with little bottles and little pills, and prices to correspond, the people flocked to him, and father was left with only a few patients and a long list of uncollectible bills against some of the deserters. Both Fan and I inclined to homeopathy and urged him to adopt it to some extent, but he shook his head. He had sat on the fence during the war, he said, and received only kicks from either side, and now he should stick to his principles and allopathy if he starved. We did not starve, but we were at times in great straits. Fan and I made over our old dresses for ourselves and little Katy, and we brushed and mended father's clothes, which, in spite of our care grew more and more threadbare and shabby until his dress coat was the only garment which was not shiny and had not more or less darns in it. This he always wore to dinner, partly from habit, partly to please us, and more I think to please old Phyllis, who felt that the glory of the family had not quite departed so long as the swallow tail appeared at dinner, even if it were laid aside the moment the meal was over. There was no denying the fact that grim poverty was staring us in the face, and no one felt it more keenly than Phyllis, who, although she would take nothing from us, offered to hire out for wages which she would give to us. This we would not allow, and we struggled on through the summer, raising and selling what we could from our land, which we all worked together, and living on as little as it was possible for five people to live upon. Fan suffered the most, she was so proud and so luxurious in her tastes and so averse to any thing like economy.

"I'd do anything for money," she said one day to Jack Fullerton, who was helping us pick our grapes, which he was to sell for us in Petersburg.

Jack had won his shoulder-straps and was a lieutenant when the war closed, but he dropped the title with his uniform and was only Jack to us,—a handsome, honest-hearted young man, whom everybody liked, whom I adored in secret, and whom Fan worried and teased and flirted with outrageously. She knew he loved her, and I believed she loved him in return. But she encouraged him one day and repelled him the next, saying often in his presence that she should never marry unless the man had money and it would be useless for one without it to offer himself to her.

"Then I'd better not do it," Jack would say, jokingly, with the most intense love burning in his eyes and sounding in his voice.

"No, you'd better not, if you don't want me to refuse to speak to you again," she would answer, with a laugh and a look which only made him more in love than ever.

He knew she cared for him, and that it was only the barrier of poverty which stood between them. And so they joked and quarreled and made up, and he was with us every day, helping in the garden and yard and at last with the grapes, of which we had quantities that year. Father was in Boston, where he had gone on some business which he hoped might result in a little profit. While there he had, through the influence of a friend, been called to see a Mrs. Haverleigh, who was very ill. As her family physician was in Europe she had asked him to attend her until she was better. To this he had consented and had been gone from home three or four weeks. Knowing that our grapes must be picked Jack had offered his services and on a lovely September morning we were all out by the vines filling the baskets with great purple clusters of fruit which Jack sometimes cut for us and sometimes Fan,

who was in wild spirits. She had taken her turn at cutting and was sitting half way up the step-ladder, looking very lovely and picturesque against the green background, in her old black skirt and scarlet jacket, with the bright color in her face and her hair blowing around her forehead. A handsome carriage drawn by a span of fine horses had gone by. Its occupants,—a gentleman and lady,—seemed to be scanning our house curiously. We could see the lady distinctly and felt sure she was from some city, Richmond presumably, and Fan was speculating about her and wishing she could ride in her carriage, when I heard a step on the grass, and a tall distinguished-looking man came towards us. In his citizen's dress I did not at once recognize him; but Fan did, and, without coming from her perch, exclaimed, "Col. Errington!"

Then I knew the handsome officer, who had once been our guest and who now greeted us with the smile I remembered so well, because it had in it something so cold and patronizing.

"Good afternoon, Colonel," Fan said to him. "You have come back to see your conquered enemies, I suppose. We heard of your promotion and of the bullet wound some of our boys gave you at Petersburg. Was it in your back?"

She was very saucy, and for an instant a hot color flamed into the Colonel's face, and there came into his grey eyes a red look such as I had seen once or twice when he was quartered upon us and his men displeased him. But it quickly faded under the spell of Fan's beauty, and the light which flashed from her eyes and belied her words.

Laughing good-humoredly, the colonel replied, "Rebellious as ever, I see; I hoped I might find you reconstructed."

"Not a bit of it," Fan said, stepping down from the ladder and running her fingers through her hair, by which means she left a long mark of grape juice on her forehead. "We are just as big rebels as ever. You beat us because you had more men and money, and we were obliged to give up. It was like a big dog fighting a little dog, which has just as much courage and more, too, than the big one, but is finally worn out by strength rather than by skill. Do you see the point?"

"Yes, I see," he said, "and in Constantinople I have also seen the big dog, after the fight was over, take the little one in its paws and toss it up and fondle it as if there had been no bone of contention. I hope it may be so in this case."

There was no mistaking the admiration with which the Colonel regarded Fan. Jack saw it and drew a step nearer to her, while she answered hotly, "Never! We are not Turks, and only a dog would suffer itself to be fondled by the hand which had whipped it." Then she added with a laugh: "Don't let us quarrel over spilled milk, but let me present to you my friend, Lieut. Fullerton, Col. Errington."

During the skirmish between the Colonel and Fan, I had mentally contrasted the two men, Jack and the Colonel, between whose ages there was a difference of several years. Both were tall and erect, with a bearing which comes only from military discipline. By the majority of people the Colonel would have been called the finer looking, as he was the more *distingué*, with his polish and air of fashion and city breeding. But to me he bore no comparison to Jack Fullerton, with his honest face and kindly smile and eyes which met yours fearlessly. His clothes were shabby and country made, it is true; his

shoes were worn and grey, and his hands were not as soft and white as those which the Colonel had a trick of rubbing together as he talked, and on one of which a small diamond was shining. But they were helpful hands, ready always for service both to friend or foe, and in his heart no passions had ever stirred like those which at times showed themselves on Col. Errington's face.

After the introduction the two men, who had fought against each other in more than one battle, shook hands as cordially as if they had been old friends and for a few moments chatted together pleasantly. Then, turning to Fan, the Colonel explained that he had come to Petersburg on business and that his sister Cornelia, who kept his house in Washington, had accompanied him. Remembering his visit to our neighborhood a little more than a year ago, and desirous to see the place again, he had suggested to his sister that they drive out from Petersburg.

"We started early," he said, "and have enjoyed ourselves immensely. Cornie is delighted with your Virginia scenery. She is at the Golden Horn, and if agreeable to you I will bring her to call."

Both Fan and I gasped at the thought of so great a lady, as we felt sure Miss Cornelia Errington must be, coming to call upon us. But we soon rallied and said we should be pleased to see her, and then to my amazement Fan added: "We would invite you to lunch if we were going to have anything but potatoes, green corn, hoe-cake and grapes. We don't have very elaborate meals since you Yankees spoiled us."

The Colonel took no notice of the last remark, but said: "Grapes, hoe-cake, green corn and baked potatoes, the four things I like best in all the culinary department, and

so does Cornie; we'll come. To say the truth I did not much like the looks of the Golden Horn. What time do you lunch?"

Fan told him, and then extended an invitation to Jack to lunch with us. But he declined, and I could see a shadow on his face as he walked away from the house, followed soon by the Colonel, who was going for his sister.

"Fanny Hathern!" I exclaimed, when we were alone, "are you crazy to ask those people here when you know we've nothing fit to offer them."

"What is good enough for us is good enough for them," Fan answered, proudly, starting for the kitchen and a conference with Phyllis, while I began to put our rooms in order for the expected visitors.

Cornelia Errington, whom her brother called Cornie, was a very handsome woman of twenty eight or thirty, but seemingly as cold as a block of marble, except when she smiled. Then the whole expression of her face changed as completely as if she had been another person. She was born in New York, but had lived many years in Washington, where she superintended her brother's house. She was highly accomplished, had traveled extensively, knew the best people everywhere, and was in every sense a lady. She met us very graciously, and affected to be delighted with our rambling old Virginia house, which she said was her ideal of a planter's home, with its great airy rooms, wide hall and broad piazzas.

"But my papa ain't a planter, he's a doctor and a gentleman," Katy said.

She had been greatly impressed with the lady's manner and dress and diamond rings, and evidently wished to impress her in turn with her father's greatness. Drawing Katy to her and stroking her golden hair Miss Errington

replied, "I am sure he is a gentleman, whether he is a doctor or a farmer, and you are a dear little creature. Was it you I heard singing in the yard before lunch?"

Katy was always singing and so accustomed were we to it that we seldom paid much attention, except sometimes to wonder if it were she or the canary bird in its cage trilling so loud and clear Now, however, we remembered to have heard her imitating a mocking bird just before Phyllis, with her red turban built up five or six inches higher than usual, announced with a low courtesy that lunch was served. There was in the room our old piano brought from Charleston by our mother and seldom used for neither Fan nor I were very musical. Going up to it Miss Errington ran her fingers up and down the keys in a way which showed that she was mistress of the instrument.

"Shocking!" she said, involuntarily, then apologetically to Fan, "I beg your pardon, but with such a voice in embryo as that I heard outside you ought to have a better piano;" then to Katy, "Sing to me, child, something, I don't care what."

Nothing could suit Katy better. She had often sang alone in school and Sunday-school, and striking her stage attitude, as Fan called it she sang as I had never heard her sing before, soaring up and up until she touched high C without the slightest effort or break in her voice.

"You will be a second Patti, you sing just as I have heard she sang when a child," Miss Errington said when Katy finished. Then, turning to us, she continued: "Do you know there is a fortune in that voice. She must have instruction; the best, too, there is to be had, and one day you will be proud when she stands before thousands and holds them spellbound as she has me, even with her simple songs."

Miss Errington was evidently an enthusiast in music, but Fan cut her short by saying scornfully, "Do you think a daughter of Dr. Hathern would ever go on the stage? Never! We have not fallen so low as that, poor as we are. I'd rather see her dead."

She was greatly excited, and Miss Errington looked at her wonderingly, while Katy pulled Fan's dress and whispered, "What is it? What did I do? Didn't I sing well?"

"Yes, too well; never sing again," Fan answered fiercely, and Katy replied, half crying, "But I must; I can't help it; it will come; it would choke me if I didn't."

"Choke, then," Fan said, while the Colonel, who had listened with an expression, half cynical and half amused, on his face, now spoke and said, "Quite a tempest in a tea-pot over nothing; Cornie is music mad, and the child certainly has a wonderful voice for one so young."

Just then a robin flew down upon a sprig of honeysuckle near the window and began to trill its evening song; quick as thought Katy darted through the door, and unmindful of Fan's injunction never to sing again, began to imitate the bird, which stopped a moment and poising itself first on one foot and then upon the other looked around for the fellow-songster it seemed to think was near it.

"I never heard anything like it," Miss Errington said. "That talent must be cultivated, but she must not strain her voice while growing. I see no reason why she should not have as much a night as Patti, or if you object so to the stage, there are the churches where she could command a large salary."

As she spoke her eyes wandered about the room and I felt sure they were taking an inventory of our faded carpet and worn, old-fashioned furniture. She seemed to

me more and more like a woman accustomed to dictate and to have her own way, and I could not rid myself of a feeling that having once seen Katy she would not readily forget her. The songs outside had ceased by this time; the robin had flown away, and the child had disappeared. Col. Errington had Fan all to himself at one end of the piazza to which we had repaired, and I was listening to a dissertation from Miss Errington on the best method for removing stains and spots from old carpets and dresses and feeling sure she had seen them in ours and was taking this way to instruct me. We had heard the whistle of the mail train from the east, and twenty minutes later Black Beauty went galloping down the lane at one side of the house with Katy on his back, bareheaded, with her fair hair blowing in the wind and her face turned smilingly towards us as she passed. We were expecting a letter from father and she was going to the Postoffice, as she often did on Black Beauty, saddleless and sometimes bridleless, for she was a fearless little rider and Black Beauty the most gentle of beasts.

"See, Cornie, that is the pony I told you about, the one some of my rascally soldiers stole," the Colonel said to his sister, who looked admiringly after the horse and rider, saying, "Upon my word, she sits the creature well, and without a saddle, too. She has more than one accomplishment."

"You will be advising us next to train her for a circus," Fan said sarcastically, but Miss Errington did not reply, and went on giving me good advice until Katy came cantering back, holding a letter in her hand and reining Beauty up to the side of the piazza.

Springing from his back and handing the letter to me she stood holding the pony by the mane, while Miss Er-

ington bent forward and began to examine him with the eye of a connoisseur.

"Really," she said to her brother, "he is a beauty and no mistake; I should like him for my own when we go to our place in the country. Is he yours?" and she looked at me.

I shook my head, and nodded towards Fan, to whom she said, "What will you take for him?"

"He is not for sale," Fan answered, decidedly, stepping down by the horse and winding her arm around his neck.

The brother and sister, so much alike in looks, were also so far alike in disposition that opposition only increased their determination to succeed. In this instance Miss Errington was the more earnest of the two and seemed resolved to carry her point and have Black Beauty whether we were willing or not, and her brother seconded her wishes. Two hundred dollars cash down in crisp greenbacks were finally offered, and I shall never forget the look on Fan's face as she put it down on Beauty's neck, thinking intently, as I well knew, of the many things we needed and which two hundred dollars would buy. Of our worn furniture generally, our house, from which the paint was gone, our shutters, unhinged and loose, and more than all father's darned and threadbare coats and shocking hat, and our own dresses, made over so many times. Two hundred dollars seemed a fortune, and Beauty was only a luxury. Father had his saddle horse for visiting the few patients who lived beyond walking distance, and Black Beauty was really more ornamental than useful to us. This was the train of thought passing through her mind, while I watched her curiously. Lifting her head at last she said proudly, with great tears

standing on her long lashes, "Next to father, Ann and Katy, I love Black Beauty better than any living thing. You can see that we are poor enough, made so by the war," here her voice began to break, but she steadied it and went on: "We need many things, but until poverty has a firmer foothold in our house than it has now I cannot let Black Beauty go. If a time comes when I must part with him I will let you know; I'd rather you had him than any one, for I believe you would be kind to him."

Taking her arm from the horse's neck she gave a peculiar whistle, saying, "Go, Beauty, go."

He understood her and went prancing down the rear lane towards his pasture; sometimes with his heels in the air and sometimes his forefeet, as if giving vent to his delight at having escaped some threatened danger. I had thought Miss Errington cold and emotionless and was surprised at the sudden transformation in her manner after this as she talked to Fan, who was soon herself again, chatting gayly and repeating ludicrous and exaggerated stories of the Colonel when he was our unbidden guest and our place full of blue coats.

It was now five o'clock and Phyllis brought in the tea service for our five o'clock tea, a custom Fan, who was extravagantly fond of tea, had introduced in imitation of an English family recently come to town and with whom we were on terms of intimacy. In our low financial state this seemed to me a useless expenditure, but when I remonstrated Phyllis silenced me by saying, "Lors, honey, what's a pinch of tea and dust of sugar, and don't I bile de groun's over in de mornin' for my breakfast. Let Miss Fanny 'lone. All de quality in England does it, dat big red coat at Mass'r Harwood's say, an' ain't we quality, if we is poor."

So we had our five o'clock tea, in which Jack often joined us, while other young people sometimes dropped in so that the occasion was usually a very enjoyable one. This afternoon it was especially so. With the appearance of the china and silver teapot Fan's spirits increased. She liked to be "quality" quite as well as Phyllis, and did the honors gracefully, serving Miss Errington from a red Dresden cup which had been one of our mother's wedding presents, and giving the colonel a royal Worcester, which belonged to Katy's mother. Whether it was the pleasure of being waited upon by Fan, or whether he was really so fond of tea, the Colonel took so many cups that several "pinches" were added to the pot, and the next morning I saw a bowl full of grounds on Phyllis's kitchen table, but knew by the fresh, pungent odor of old Hyson which permeated the room that she was indulging in something more than a "bilin' over." After our tea-drinking the carriage came for our guests who expressed themselves as delighted with their call.

"Come to Washington and I will show you all the sights," Miss Errington said to us both; then to me, "Take care of Katy's voice."

Just what the Colonel said to Fan I did not hear. He was talking very low and looking at her with his cold, steely eyes, which kindled as he looked and brought a hot flush to her face.

"No, no. I don't think I will," I heard her say, and that was all.

After he was gone she stood watching the carriage until it was out of sight; then said to me, "That man had the effrontery to ask me to write to him, and he squeezed my hand so hard that it aches now; the old idiot! I am going to wash it."

Bouncing out of the room she ran into the arms of Jack Fullerton, who came to say that all the grape baskets at the vines were full and to ask if there were more to be filled. I am afraid we were rather a shiftless lot; at least we were told so often enough in the future—coming on apace. We were certainly thoughtless, and while visiting and tea-drinking entirely forgot that the baskets must be ready that night if they went on the early morning train to Richmond. But Jack had not forgotten, and while I talked to Miss Errington and Fan flirted with the Colonel, he worked steadily on, occasionally crushing a cluster of the ripe fruit so hard that the juice spurted over his coat as he caught the sound of Fan's rippling laughter and the deep tones of the man whom he began to dread as his rival. But Fan more than made amends now.

Seizing his arm with both hands and rubbing her cheek against it, she exclaimed, "You dear old Jack, how good you are to us, doing our work, while we entertain those people for whom we don't care a pin; and don't you think, he asked me to correspond with him!"

"He did?" Jack said, indignantly, and Fan replied, "Yes, he did, and he's forty, if he's a day."

She knew he wasn't forty, but she was trying to appease Jack, whose brown eyes shone with delight as he looked at her, and who, when he thought I did not see him, tried to raise her hand to his lips. But she wrenched it away, and stood back from him, saying laughingly, "No, you don't. No man has ever kissed me except father and Charlie and the boy, and never will until——"

She didn't say when, but Jack did not seem at all disturbed, and that night long after I was in bed he sat upon the piazza with her, and I heard the low murmur of their voices and felt again the old pain in my heart,

and knew that I would give years of my life for the love for which Fan cared so little.

Chapter IV.—Annie's Story Continued.

A SHADOW BEGINS TO FALL.

The letter which Katy brought us from the office was from father, who was still in Boston and attending Mrs. Haverleigh. She was better, he wrote, but unwilling he should leave her until all danger of a relapse was past, consequently we need not expect him until the end of a week when he hoped to bring us a big fee, as his patient was said to be very wealthy. He did not mention Mr. Haverleigh, but of course there was such an appendage to Mrs. Haverleigh and he would pay the bill. Then we began to speculate as to the probable amount and what we should buy with it. Fan decided upon new boots and gloves; Katy was to have a doll; while I hoped she might also have music lessons, for aside from her wonderful voice she had a great fondness for the piano and had already picked out a few simple tunes which she played with a good deal of expression. Jack, who was always included in our family councils, as if he were our brother, laughingly told us not to count our chickens until they were hatched, and the sequel proved the wisdom of his advice.

At the end of the week father came home, looking fresher and younger and more erect than when he went away. The trip had done him a great deal of good. He had met several old friends and made some new ones. When we inquired for Mrs. Haverleigh he did not seem

inclined to talk much of her, but in answer to Fan's direct question he told us the amount of his fee. He had made her so many professional visits and received the usual city price for each visit; fifty dollars in all. It was not a large sum, and it went mostly to pay the little household bills which in spite of our economy accumulated so fast. I gave up the music lessons for Katy, while Fan called Mr. Haverleigh a stingy old man, as she blacked her shabby boots and mended her worn gloves.

Sometime in November Jack went into an insurance office in Richmond, and life at the Elms moved in so monotonous a groove that Fan, who craved excitement, sometimes wished the war back upon us to keep us from stagnating. There were one or two letters from Miss Errington, addressed to me and full of Katy's future.

Several times the Colonel sent Fan papers and magazines and once he wrote her a letter which she promptly tore up, and then cried for half a day. Every week father had a letter from Boston which he answered within a few days. Once in passing the hall stand where he had laid a letter while he went to his room for his gloves, I glanced hastily at it and read, as I supposed, "Mr. Thomas Haverleigh, No. — Beacon St., Boston, Mass." Fan would have taken it up and made sure of the direction, but I only gave it a look and wondered why he was writing to Mr. Haverleigh. He was a good deal changed these days and he seemed silent and abstracted and I often saw him looking at us in a wistful way as if there was something on his mind which he hated to tell us.

"It's money matters and the miserable bills we owe everywhere that trouble him," Fan said, when I spoke of it to her.

"Oh, if I were rich, and could help him; and I can. There is a way."

"What way?" I asked, and she replied, "I can sell Black Beauty, or—myself, which is better. Isn't it sometimes a duty to sacrifice one's self for others? I didn't tell you that Col. Errington proposed to me in that letter I burned up! Well, he did, in an assured kind of way, as if he thought I would be overwhelmed with the honor and say yes at once; then, as if a doubt crept into his mind, he told me to weigh the matter carefully before answering, for if a favor were once refused him he never asked for it a second time. I *am* weighing the matter carefully. I have not answered his letter. I keep hoping something will turn up. If it don't I shall marry the Colonel."

"And what of Jack?" I asked.

At the mention of his name Fan flushed a little, then replied, "I like Jack and always shall, but what can he do, hampered with an invalid mother and only an insurance clerk's salary. I was never intended for a poor man's wife and would rather live at home in poverty with you than in Jack's home with his mother and old black Patsey, who was always runing away during the war and only came back after it was over because she couldn't do better."

There was no use arguing with Fan when in this mood, and the subject was not mentioned again for months. I knew she did not write to Col. Errington, and she did write occasionally to Jack during the winter, which passed rather slowly, for Lovering was never very gay at its best, and the war had left too many aching hearts for us to be very hilarious. Father, however, seemed in unusually good spirits and I occasionally heard him whistling or humming softly to himself when he was alone. When March came round he surprised us one morning saying he was going to Boston again on some important business which he hoped would result favorably for us all. He did not tell

us what the business was, but when Fan asked if it had anything to do with Mr. Haverleigh, he answered, "Not directly; no," and we said good-bye to him with no suspicion of the truth. He had bought himself a new suit of clothes, which he greatly needed, and we were very proud of him when he put them on. We told him he looked quite the Virginia gentleman again, and Fan came near boxing Phyllis's ears when she heard her muttering something about "ole mas'r savin' his money to pay his debts instead of scurripen' roun' de country an' makin' a fool of hisself."

"As if our father could make a fool of himself! What does Phyllis mean?"

"I believe he has been speculating," Fan said to me, "I feel sure something good is going to turn up, if we wait long enough."

Chapter V.—The Author's Story.

SOMETHING DOES TURN UP.

Dr. Hathern had been gone two weeks and in that time had written but one letter to his daughters. This was addressed to Fanny and in it he said that the business which had taken him to Boston was progressing favorably and he should soon feel at liberty to tell what it was and return home a happier and more prosperous man than when he left it. Meanwhile his daughters were to enjoy themselves and get whatever was needed for their comfort. Then he added as if it were an afterthought:

"By the way, I think it would be well for Phyllis to give the whole house a regular overhauling,—housecleaning they call it at the north, and I remember when I was

a boy that every thorough housekeeper did this twice a year,—taking up and beating carpets, washing curtains and blankets and paint and floors and putting the furniture out to air. I have no doubt southern housekeepers do the same, and it seems to me there were some such upheavals which made me very uncomfortable when your mother was living; but nothing of the sort has occurred since. You were too young when your own mother and Katy's died to know about such things, and Phyllis, who has been in charge so long, has not thought of it. Negroes are apt to be slack.

"Consult Mrs. Fullerton, if you don't know what to do, and if extra help is needed for Phyllis, get it, of course. Tell her to take especial pains with my room. I think I have detected a faint musty smell in it when the air was damp. This can be remedied by beating the carpet thoroughly and letting in a great deal of sunshine. I may have kept it shut up too much. You will hear from me again in about two weeks and then I shall tell you when to expect me.

"Your loving father,

"SAMUEL HATHERN."

This letter Fanny read aloud to Annie, with running comments upon it as she read.

"Is father growing crazy, or what has got into him to write in such a strain. *Must*, indeed, in his room! It's his old boots and shoes and saddlebags of medicines which he keeps in his closet. House cleaning twice a year, with everything turned out of the windows! Thinks we have never had one since mother died! Haven't we?"

Annie didn't think they had, and the most she could recall during her mother's lifetime was a faint remembrance of bare floors and dirt and straw and litter, and soap and suds and discomfort generally, with a scurrying here and there of negroes with Phyllis at the helm; then a great quiet, with the fireplaces full of green boughs and

peonies and snowballs and herself and Fanny told not to put their little soiled fingers on the window panes because they had just been washed. This was very far back, and neither Annie nor Fanny could remember any house-cleaning since so extreme as that. Certainly there had been none since Katy's mother died, and Phyllis had managed the household. In short, as they confessed to each other, they were rather easy-going young ladies, who, accustomed to many servants before the war, had fallen into the habit of leaving everything to Phyllis. And that functionary was very willing to have it left to her, and waited upon them and petted them and scolded them alternately with all the freedom of an old and trusty family servant.

In the days of slavery there had been no more valuable negro in Lovering than herself, and she knew it, and prided herself upon it and the respectability of her ancestors generally as proven by the fact that there was not a drop of white blood in her veins.

"I'd be ashamed if there was, and blush for my mother. Black is a good color, which wears well, and I thank de Lord I am as black as a Guiney nigger," she said; but she was equally proud of the fair faces of the twins and little Katy, whom she loved as if they were her own.

She had nursed them when they were babies; had walked the floor with them many a night when they were teething or had the colic; had drawn them miles and miles from cabin to cabin in a baby cart—proud of her twins and proud of herself as "Mas'r Hathern's nigger, who was worth more'n a thousand dollars, and who he wouldn't sell for nothin';" she had closed the eyes of both her mistresses, and prepared them for the grave. She had comforted the two little motherless girls with cake and honey and a most wonderful rag doll, and taken the new-born

baby, Katy, to her bosom and bed. She had tried to run away with a part of the Federal army, but found that she could not, so great was her love for her master and his family. She was a part of them, or rather they were a part of her, and after she assumed the entire management of the household she owned them just as they once owned her, and sometimes ruled them more rigorously than she had ever been ruled.

In this condition of things it was natural that the young ladies should settle down into a state of listless dependence, allowing her to do what she pleased and when she pleased, and giving but little thought to what was done or left undone, provided they were comfortable and the general look of the house was neat and tidy. At long intervals she had her times of "clarin' up," when the house was full of brooms and brushes and mops and clouds of dust and the odor of soap suds. On these occasions, in a petticoat patched with many colors, which stopped half way between her knees and her feet and a knit jacket left by one of the soldiers, Phyllis would march from room to room, rating the young ladies soundly for the disorderly condition in which she found them, and wondering what their poor mother would say if she knew how they slatted their things and left them for her to pick up, when every bone in her old body ached. But if they tried to help her she spurned their offers disdainfully. She reckoned she knew what "de quality ought to do, an' it wan't for her young misseses to sile dar white hands, when dar was a big pair of black ones, made to soil and spin. What did cussed be Canan mean if it wan't that the blacks was to sweat an' slave and have der bad times in dis world an' de whites der good, an' in de nex' *wise wersa.*"

Phyllis was great on theology and powerful in a prayer

meeting, where she could be heard for nearly a quarter of a mile, when she was moved by the *sperrit* to let herself out. Naturally her arguments prevailed when she brought forward the Bible to prove their validity, and Annie and Fanny usually succumbed and let her have her way.

Occasionally when she wished to try some fancy dish Fanny made a raid upon the kitchen, greatly to the discomfiture of Phyllis, who fluttered like a hen when its brood of chickens is disturbed, while a close observer might have thought she was fearful of having something discovered which she wished to hide. But Fanny knew better, and after the time she found the nutmeg grater in Phyllis's pocket and the rolling pin, which had been lost for two or three days, on the floor under the table, she abandoned the kitchen, and the old negress was left monarch of all she surveyed.

Now, however, there must be a general cleaning,—a thorough overhauling,—and Fanny was deputed to notify Phyllis, whom she found eating her dinner on a stool outside her cabin door, her turban somewhat awry and her usually good-humored face clouded over as she shoo-ed the chickens and screamed at the dog, which from an adjoining garden had strayed into her domains.

"A reg'lar overhaulin', wid de carpets all up and whaled, an' de furniture turned out of do' to a'r, an' his room smellin' of musk," she said, when Fanny told what her father had written. "Is Mas'r Hathern 'sinuatin' that I'm dirty, an' I sarvin' him so long an' faithful? I wouldn't have ble'ved it," and her voice trembled and her head shook till her turban was displaced and took an upward turn, as it was wont to do when she was displeased.

It was a saying of the young ladies that they could tell

Phyllis's state of mind from the height of her turban, and when Fan saw it begin to lengthen she knew there was a storm brewing, and braced herself to meet it.

"Who's to take up dem carpets an' wallop 'em, and put 'em down again I'd like to know. Last time I clar'd up I done cotched such a misery in my back and laigs that I've had rheumatis' ever since, and I didn't hist up de carpets nuther."

Fanny explained that she was to have help, but this only brought out a snort from the old woman, who went on: "Extra help, as if I was an onery nigger like old Patsey. An' for de Lord's sake whar's de money to come from to pay de help? Mas'r can't pay de bills now, unless he sells me, an' sometimes I think I'll 'vise him to do dat an' get out of debt."

"But you are free. We can't sell you, and wouldn't if we could; that is all in the past," Fanny suggested.

"Dat's so; more's de pity," Phyllis rejoined, and went on to say that she reckoned she wan't so old yet that she couldn't wallop a carpet and put it down, if her knees were not too stiff and she should do it, too; and begin the next day; help indeed, when she was round.

By this time the Fullerton chickens were on the strawberry patch again and the Fullerton dog had his nose in the refuse pail, which he finally upset. But in her excitement Phyllis did not notice it. She was too intent upon the housecleaning, which was commenced the next morning with a vengeance, and without the slightest system or order. Every room and closet from cellar to garret was turned upside down, with carpets up and furniture out, and not a spot where one could sit and be comfortable. They ate on the pantry shelf and slept on the floor while the worst of the pandemonium continued. True to

her determination Phyllis *walloped* the carpets herself and did it so effectually that one of them, the oldest and most tender was *walloped* into tatters and could not be used again. When it came to putting them down Phyllis gave out. Her knees would not bend, and her back and arms were too lame, while not a negro was to be found willing to help. Fortunately in this emergency Jack had an off day, which he spent with Fan and Ann, who pressed him into service. Arrayed in one of Phyllis's clean turbans and aprons, and armed with hammer and nails, he attacked the carpets vigorously and with the help of the young ladies and with a great deal of joking and fun they were put down as few carpets were ever put down before,—crooked and puckered, and loose, while Jack had a blood blister on his thumb and Fanny a bruise on her knuckles, where she struck them with the hammer, and Annie a headache, which lasted two whole days. But they were down and seemed very fresh and clean, as did the entire house when Phyllis was through with it and free to nurse her swollen arms and hands, the result of so much lifting and carpet beating. The odor of must, if there had ever been any, had disappeared from the Doctor's room, with his old boots and saddle-bags. As it was his carpet which had been beaten to tatters, its place had been supplied with some light, pretty matting bought at a reduced rate at a forced sale.

"I wish we could afford a new chamber set, too," Fan said, looking ruefully at the high post bedstead, with its canopy and valence, and at the bureau and chairs older than she was, as they had come from the south with her mother.

But this was out of the question. The family purse was too low. The chamber set was given up. The post

bedstead, with its feather bed, was made high and soft, and the best white counterpane put upon it. There were clean covers upon the bureau and square stand, where the Book of Psalms, which the first Mrs. Hathern had used, was still lying, and with it a prayer-book which had belonged to Katy's mother. Fan brought a pretty pin cushion from her room, with a slipper case and tidy, and when all was done, called Phyllis to see the effect.

"Mighty fine and invitin';" Phyllis said, "'pears like you're expectin' a bride, te-he-he."

The laugh had in it a sound of sobbing, rather than of merriment, and Phyllis's turban was slightly elongated as she went back to her work. All her insinuations, however, were lost upon the daughters, who, with no suspicion of her meaning, sat down to enjoy the quiet and freshness of their home, daily expecting a letter telling when their father was coming to enjoy it with them.

Chapter VI.—Annie's Story.

THE SHADOWS DEEPEN.

After a ten days' siege the housecleaning came to an end, with no worse disaster than the entire demolition of one carpet, literally beaten to death,—the breaking of one or two windows, a caster split off from a bureau, and a cupboard with dishes in it knocked flat in our attempts to move it. Phyllis had a "misery" in her back and we were all more or less afflicted with colds we had caught during the upheaval. But we had a heap of fun with Jack, who helped us out, and the house was clean, or we thought it so, and only father's presence was needed to make us quite happy again. But he did not come and he

didn't write. Every morning we said "we shall hear from him to-day," and every night a fresh disappointment awaited us, for he neither wrote nor came, and in our anxiety we were beginning to think of telegraphing to his address in Boston and inquiring if any thing had happened to him. It was Fan who suggested this one morning, about a week after the cleaning was over.

"Wait one more day," I said, "and if we do not hear to-night we'll telegraph to-morrow."

It was now past the middle of April, but the day was cold and cloudy, and late in the afternoon the rain began to fall, softly at first like a gentle April shower, but gradually increasing until by the time we heard the train from the east and Fan started for the office it was a regular downpour, which beat against the windows and ran in great streams from a defective eaves-trough over the door. In all lives there are some days which so impress themselves upon our minds that the minutest detail is never forgotten, but comes to us over and over again, with the joy or the sorrow which wrote itself so indelibly upon our memories. Such a day was this, and as I write I hear again the soughing of the wind through a great pine tree which stood in a corner of the yard, and the rain sifting down upon the turf beneath it, and see the blaze from the pine knots which Phyllis had lighted on the hearth, and as the blaze leaps up, filling the room with warmth and light I see at my side Katy's golden head bent over the picture-book she is reading, while one of her small white hands rests upon my lap. In the kitchen I hear old Phyllis crooning a well-known melody, consisting mostly of inquiries as to the whereabouts of the Hebrew children, as she prepares our evening meal.

During father's absence we had dispensed with our six

o'clock dinner and contented ourselves with lunch and our five o'clock tea, but this night I had ordered a substantial supper, with a vague presentiment that father might surprise us, and I can smell the savory dishes as I smelled them then and feel the same appetizing sensation which they brought to me. As the light and heat from the pine knot increased and the flames went rolling up the chimney in graceful curves, the faces of the dead looked at me from the blaze,—faces of the boy in grey and the boy in blue whose graves were on the hillside. That of the boy in blue was the more distinct, and I saw again the great sunken blue eyes which had turned to us so wistfully as the pale lips pleaded that we would not "let them get him," or "let her find him." We knew whom he meant by *them*, and were reasonably sure that the *her* was the Aunt Martha, for whom neither Fan nor myself entertained a great amount of respect.

Now, as I watched the fire,—half asleep it may be,—and saw alternately the faces of my brother and the *boy*, Aunt Martha came also and stood before me on the hearth,—a tall thin woman of the New England type, with firm-set lips and hard, unsympathetic eyes, which never softened a whit when I questioned her of "the boy," and asked why she had never come to inquire for him before, and who was the Carlyle he had spoken of so kindly. Just as she was about to answer me Katy started up exclaiming, "There she is," and I awoke to hear the sound of voices outside.—Fan's voice, and with it another which always made my heart beat faster, although it never spoke to me except as a brother might speak to his sister. Jack had come home that evening and Fan had met him and brought him with her, and they came in laughing and chatting merrily, and shaking the rain drops from their umbrellas and wraps.

"How perfectly delightful that fire is," Fan said, holding one of her wet boots near it to dry, and bidding Phyllis bring a plate for Jack and hurry on the supper, as she was nearly famished. "I have a letter from father," she continued, as we drew up to the table, "but it will keep till after tea."

We were a very merry party, as we always were when Jack was with us, for he had the happy faculty of knowing how to bring out the best of everybody. He had been promoted and his salary increased, and he was in high spirits, as we all were, and not one of us dreamed of what was in store for us, when, as Jack asked me for his third cup of coffee, Fan, who had finished her supper, said, "If you are going to drink coffee all night and don't mind, I'll see what father has written."

She took his letter from her pocket; looked at it very leisurely; opened it carefully with a knife, as if afraid of spoiling the envelope, and then began to read it. I was pouring Jack some hot coffee, which Phyllis had just brought in, and did not look at her until Jack startled me by saying, "Why, Fan, what is the matter?"

Then I turned to her and saw that her face was nearly as white as the letter over which her eyes were traveling with lightning speed.

"Fanny, Fanny," I exclaimed; "what is it? what has happened? Is father ill, or dead?"

"Neither," she answered, in a voice very unlike herself. "Neither ill nor dead, as you mean it; but dead to us. He is to be married to-night at eight o'clock."

For a moment everything turned black around me, and I might have fallen from my chair if Phyllis, who was standing near me, had not put her hand upon me as she said, "Surmised it all 'long. I done tol' you so."

Neither Fan nor I paid any attention to her then; we were too intent upon the letter, which Fan at last read aloud and which ran thus:

"BOSTON, April—, 1866.

"MY DEAR DAUGHTERS:

"I am very glad that I can at last tell you something definite with regard to the business which brought me to Boston, and which will soon be happily completed. You remember the Mrs. Haverleigh whom I attended last fall through a dangerous illness? Well, the admiration I conceived for her then has since ripened into what, if I were a younger man, I should call love."

"Love!" Fan repeated, scornfully. "Love! and he almost sixty years old. If he were not my father, I'd call him a fool!"

"No fool so big as an old fool!" came explosively from Phyllis, whose turban seemed bristling with rage as she spoke out exactly what was in my mind.

"You here?" Fan said, angrily. "Go away about your business."

But Phyllis did not budge. She was a part of us. What concerned us concerned her, and in this crisis she meant to stand by us and learn the best or worst there was to learn.

"Where was I?" Fan asked, and Jack, who did not look as disturbed as I thought he ought, suggested, "Love!"

"Oh yes: 'ripened into love.' Ripened into fiddlesticks," Fan said, and read on:

"When I left home I was not quite certain as to the result of my errand, but I am now. Mrs. Haverleigh has consented to marry me on Thursday evening of this week at eight o'clock, and I am writing this in the hope it may reach you that evening, and that you will send me your

congratulations, in spirit at least. Mrs. Haverleigh is a remarkable woman,—very fine-looking, and about forty, I imagine, although she does not look it. I have never asked her age. She has traveled extensively,—is well educated, and belongs to some of the best families of New England. Indeed, I believe she traces her ancestry back in a direct line to Miles Standish of the Mayflower."

"I never could bear Standish. What business had he to think of Priscilla when he had had a Rose?" Fan said, with an upward tilt of her nose. "Best families in New England! Humbug! as if that made her any better. Don't we belong to some of the best families in the south?"

Then she read on:

"She is a member of several clubs and societies, and has most excellent ideas with regard to bringing up children. In this respect she will be invaluable in training little Katy, who I think manages herself mostly."

"I don't want to be trained," Katy interrupted, with a whimper.

"And you are not going to be trained either," Fan said, drawing the child close to her. Then she added: "Let's see what other virtue this paragon possesses. Oh, yes:"

"She is also, an incomparable housekeeper,—thorough in every thing, and will relieve you of all care."

"Hm! I didn't know we had any care; Phyllis takes all that," Fan said.

"Dat's so, honey," came from Phyllis, who was standing behind her, stiff as a stake, while Fan continued:

"She is wealthy, too, and inclined to be very generous with me. She knows my circumstances perfectly, and how the war impoverished us, and has made over to me more than enough to pay my debts and have something left."

"Very unmanly in father to take her money. I must say I am disappointed in him in more ways than one," was Fan's next remark, before continuing:

"I do not yet understand why she is willing to leave her handsome house in Boston and come to our plain, run-down home, but she is, and as soon as possible she will have sent to us a part of her furniture, together with her cook and housemaid and probably a coachman. This will be a great help to Phyllis, who is getting old, and who, while she does well for us, can hardly meet the requirements of a Boston housekeeper."

"For de Lord's sake, has ole Mas'r done gone perfec'ly daff over dat widder? Me getting ole! who knows how ole I am? I don't, nor Mas'r either. What for dat woman bringin' white trash down har to boss me? I not stan' it!" Phyllis broke in with a flourish of the knives and forks she had in her hand, one of which flew off at right angles and came near hitting Jack in the head.

"Go it," he said laughingly, as he picked up the knife and replaced it on the table, while Fan turned to Phyllis and said, "You here yet? Didn't I tell you to leave long ago?"

"Yes, honey, but I's har jess de same, an' I's gwine to stay, too, an' spress my 'pinion of dis yer Massachusetts woman fotchin' her truck whar I's sarved this forty year, an' never started to run away but onct, when de sojers tell me de fine stories of freedom. What does I want of freedom? Nothin'. I'd be sold down de river to-day to sarve you, but I won't be,—what you call it,—trampled on by dem whites. No, sir!" and here she turned to Jack, shaking her fist at him. "No, sir! An' shoo's you bawn, ef dey tries it, dar'll be wah! Yes, *wah!* Wus than t'other, an' dis time it'll be de Federates an' not de Fed's who

beats. Bet your soul on dat. Now I've had my say; I'se gwine."

She nearly shook off her turban, which stood up almost a foot as she marched out of the room, followed by Jack's hearty, "Three cheers for Phyllis! Good for you!"

"Is there more?" I asked, as Phyllis disappeared, and Fan continued:

"We are going to New York and Washington, and shall reach home in ten days or two weeks at the most. Will telegraph you when to expect us. I need not ask you to receive your new mother cordially and kindly. As ladies and my daughters you can hardly do otherwise. You will love her when you know her. I should like you to call her mother, but if you feel that you cannot, I shall not insist. Katy, of course, will address her as mamma. She has never had a daughter and will take to the child at once. She has a son who is now at Andover, but who will spend his summer vacation with us. He is fifteen or sixteen,—a fine, handsome lad, with all the polish and manner of twenty-five. He seems delighted with the prospect of having sisters. He calls you that already and is especially desirous to see little Katy, whose photograph I have with me and have shown him. He is here this evening and sends his love, and says tell you he expects a great deal of pleasure with you in the summer. His name is *Carl*. Mrs. Haverleigh, also, wishes to be kindly remembered. If you care to write to me, direct to Ebbett House, Washington.

"Lovingly your father,

"SAMUEL HATHERN."

After the reading of the letter there was silence for a few moments, broken only by the sound of the rain which was still falling heavily, the crackling of the pine knots on the hearth and the ticking of the clock. Glancing up at it at last Fan said, "They were to be married at eight. There

is a difference of time between Boston and Richmond. The ceremony is over, and we have lost our father."

Then she began to cry and I cried with her, while Jack tried to comfort us, telling us to look on the bright side,—that it might not be so bad after all. We had had one step-mother and loved her, and we might love another.

"That was very different from a Boston woman, who belongs to clubs and societies and has views, and all that," Fan said. "We did love Katy's mother. She was like us, and didn't want to turn the house upside down with her raging housekeeping, as this woman will. She was easy-going, and she gave us Katy."

Putting her arm around the little girl, Fan drew her closely to her with a gesture as if shielding her from some threatened danger. Assured that she was not to be *trained*, Katy looked upon the marriage rather favorably, and smoothing Fan's hair caressingly, she said, "Don't cry, the new mother will be nice, and then there's brother Carl. I am so glad for him. I've wanted a brother ever since Charlie died, and after you told me to pray for what I wanted, I did pray, first for a doll that shut its eyes, and I got it,—then for a hoop, and I got it,—and then for a boy-brother, and we've got him. I get everything I want."

Katy's faith in prayer was very strong, and Fan, who had taught her this faith, could not discourage it now, although wishing that her prayers had taken some other object than a boy-brother.

That night on our way to bed we stopped for a moment at father's room, the door of which stood open. In the winter, when there was no company in the house, it was really our living room, where most of our evenings were spent. Our father liked it warm when he came in at

night, and there was always a bright fire on the hearth, with his arm-chair and slippers on one side, and next it the stand, with his book and paper and spectacles upon it, for he often read aloud to us, with Katy's bright head resting on his knee, while Fan and I sewed, or embroidered, sitting on the settee rocker opposite him. This was all over now. A stranger had come between us, who would sit by father's side while his children shifted for themselves. Some such thoughts as these were in our minds when we stepped into the room which we had taken so much pains to make attractive for his home-coming.

"I wish we had let it alone,—*must* and all," Fan said. "I am glad we couldn't buy a new chamber set. Let her bring her own, as I dare say she will. I mean to take my pink pin-cushion away. I didn't put it here for *her*."

But she left it. I knew she would, as she always subsided into quiet after a storm. We sat up late that night talking the matter over, and decided finally to make the best of it for father's sake and never let him, nor any one but Jack, know that the new wife was not acceptable. We couldn't deceive Phyllis, however, nor console her either, and for two days she went about the house with the tears dropping from her nose and running down her cheeks. "It was not so much the missus she 'jected to," she said, "though it was bad enough to be sot on and bossed around by a stranger when she had been fust so long. It was the po' white trash comin' down with their a'rs that she couldn't stan', an' wouldn't. She'd run away fust! an' if they sot the dogs on her she'd drown herself in the river; then see how ole mas'r'd feel when they brought her home drownded like a rat!"

Notwithstanding there was nothing to run from Phyllis was always threatening to run when disturbed or displeas-

ed, but had never contemplated suicide before, and now, in her pity for herself and for us when she should be fished from the river, limp and dead, she forgot the new mistress in a measure, and on the second day asked if she hadn't better wash the windows again in *master's* room. The marriage was generally known by this time, but no one congratulated us and few spoke of it at all. Evidently, it did not meet with approbation. Always perverse and contradictory, this silence on the part of our friends made Fan angry, and turned the tide in favor of the stranger. "Father had a right to marry if he chose, and the neighbors were very impudent to object," she said, and, greatly to my surprise, she began to evince a good deal of interest in the coming of Mrs. Hathern. To Katy the new mother was to be *mamma*, but to us, Mrs. Hathern, and it seemed to me Fan took special pains to repeat the name as often as possible.

"I am trying to get used to it, but oh, how I hate it all. I'll not let people know though," she said to me, with quivering lips, and then she broke down and sobbed hysterically, declaring that she'd run away with Phyllis and drown herself, or marry Col. Errington. She hadn't answered his letter yet, but she would that very day.

Possibly she might have done so if the post had not brought us a letter mailed in Andover and directed in a large boyish hand to "The Misses Hathern." It was from Carl, who wrote:

"DEAR FANNY AND ANNIE AND KATY:

"I am awfully glad that you are my sisters, and I am going to tell you about the wedding. I was there and saw your father endow my mother with all his worldly goods and heard her promise to obey him. She won't do it, though, you bet. They mostly never do, I guess, and

mother least of all. They seem happy as clams; so I suppose old people can be in love as well as young. I shouldn't like mother to know I said that. She'd be mad as a hornet. She thinks she's young, but she will be forty next birthday. She is a very handsome woman though. I never wanted mother to marry. She has had offers as thick as huckleberries, and I kicked at them all until I saw your father, and then I gave in and told her that she might. I like him immensely and I'm going to like you, especially little Katy, she's so lovely. Your father showed me her photograph, and finally gave it to me, I begged so hard. I've shown it to the boys, and made them green with envy by telling them of the good times I am to have next summer in the Virginia woods and hills and in the old house with you. I hate the city, and like the country, and always wanted to go south. I was sorry I was not old enough to enlist in the army;—not to shoot anybody, but to see the country. I suppose you were rebels. Well, that's right. I should have been, too, if I had been born south; but I'm a northerner, and yelled myself hoarse when I heard our men were in Richmond. I was in the country, and I and a lot more boys stole so many dry-goods boxes and barrels and wood for a bonfire that one old copperhead, whose chicken coop we took, had us arrested. Between you and I,—you and me, I mean,—I don't believe your father is more than half a reb, or he wouldn't sit so quiet and hear mother rake the south. She's peppery. I said to her it wasn't good form, and she told me to shut up, and I shut! I generally do when she tells me to.

"I wish you'd write to me. I like girls immensely, and they like me, but only one has ever written to me, and that didn't count. It was Julina Smith,—mother's maid,—two or three years older than I am. I'm fifteen. She is rather spoony, and made me a pair of slippers and sent them to me with a letter in which she called me 'Dear Carl,' and ended with 'Your loving Julina.' The slippers were well enough, if she wanted to give them to me, but the *loving Julina* was a little too much. I

tore the letter up, and when I went home and she made eyes at me I told her to *dry up*, and she *dried*. I believe mother intends taking her to Virginia, and if she does you will have to *set on her*, I can tell you.

"It is nearly class-time and I must stop. I am studying Greek and Latin and a lot more stuff, and expect to enter Harvard when I know enough. And now, in the words of the divine Julina, or *Julienne* as she'd like to be called, seeing there's French blood in her,

"Yours lovingly,

"CARL HAVERLEIGH."

P. S. I guess you'll like me. Girls generally do, although they say I am fickle and pretend a lot I don't mean. But I mean it at the time. I can't always keep up to concert pitch when the concert is over, nor keep smelling a rose after its perfume is gone. Now that sounds rather poetical and neat, don't it?

"Yours again, CARL."

This letter, over which we laughed till we cried, helped to turn our thoughts from the dreaded step-mother to the bright, frank boy, whom we felt sure we should like, during the concert, at least, and while the perfume of the rose lasted. Fan read most of the letter to Phyllis, who, at its commencement, stood with her hands on her hips, her elbows elevated and her nose in the air. But before its close her nose and elbows came down and a broad smile broke over her face.

"Bress de boy!" she said. "'Pears like mas'r Charlie, only in course 'taint to be 'spected he's so peart-like seein' he's from de norf, whar dey's all so onery."

"But, Phyllis," Fan said, "he is from Boston, and must have a heap of Boston culture."

"What's dat ar?" Phyllis asked, but Fan did not explain, and left Phyllis wondering if Boston culture was *'catchin'*.

Chapter VII.—Author's Story.

THE COMING OF THE BRIDE.

The two weeks which Dr. Hathern had mentioned as the longest possible time before his return were nearly up, and his daughters were daily expecting some message from him telling when he would be home. They had become somewhat accustomed to thoughts of the new mother and the new order of things she was to inaugurate, and felt that there might be some compensation.

"It will be rather fine to have a posse of servants,—white ones, too," Fan said. "We shall quite outshine the Lovering people with our style. Coachman,—that means carriage and horses,—cook, maid, besides Phyllis, who, I suppose, will be the laundress. That will give us all the white skirts and dresses we want. I dote on white skirts."

Fan was rather luxurious in her tastes and would have liked nothing better than fresh white skirts and linen every day, and would have had them, too, but for her compassion on Phyllis, who usually had a "fetched misery in her back" on Monday, and a worse one on ironing day, if there were too many *frillicks*, as she called them, in the wash. The prospect of new furniture was not, on the whole, displeasing, although they were greatly attached to the solid old-fashioned things which had belonged to their mother. Still it would not be out of place to excel their neighbors, inasmuch as they were what Phyllis termed the "fustest family in town." On the whole, they began to feel quite reconciled to the marriage, and took a good deal of pains to make the house as attractive as possible for the bride. They had Phyllis's word that it was as

clean as soap and water and her two hands could make it, and as they never thought of peering into corners they contented themselves with little changes here and there, which they thought were artistic.

It was now May and the garden was full of early flowers, with which they meant to brighten the rooms at the last.

A letter had come from Miss Errington, who had noticed among the arrivals at the Ebbitt House the names of Dr. Samuel Hathern and wife, Lovering, Va., and as she knew there was but one Lovering in Virginia, and but one Dr. Samuel Hathern in Lovering, she felt sure it was their father with a new wife and had ventured to call.

"They received me in their private parlor," she wrote, "and I was charmed with your father. Such a genial, courtly gentleman of the old school and so proud of his bride. She is a very handsome, well-preserved woman, and is *au fait* in everything pertaining to etiquette,—and knows how to dress perfectly. She has a good deal of Boston manner, and I should say decided views on most things. I imagine there may be a little Scotch blood in her, which accounts for a certain accent in her speech. She seems to be well educated, and, like myself, is very fond of music. Indeed, she is quite up in that, and, remembering little Katy's wonderful voice, I spoke of it and said I hoped she might have every facility in the way of music. She assured me she would see to it, and what she says she means; there is no doubt of that. On the whole, you are to be congratulated on having a superior woman for a step-mother."

There was a good deal more of irrelevant matter, with one or two allusions to her brother, who was about going abroad on business. But over this the sisters passed hastily. Their interest centered in the mother.

"Scotch descent,—Boston manners and views. I knew she had *views*," Fan said, with a toss of her head. "She is woman's rights and runs an abolition society, I dare say, or did before the war. Fine musician; I wish Miss Errington would mind her business about Katy. I wonder what madam will think of our old rattle-trap of a piano. Very likely she will bring us a Steinway or a Chickering."

This letter, instead of reassuring the sisters, made them rather uneasy with regard to the cultivated woman with views. What would she think of them, who had scarcely been outside of Lovering, and who knew so little of the world?

"I reckon I shall hate her, after all," Fan thought, as she began to pull herself together and to remember sundry acts of abandon and bits of slang in which she sometimes indulged and which would be hard to give up.

Annie, on the contrary, who never shocked any one, and whom her sister called a flat iron, or a flat, from her propensity to smooth matters and make the best of them, began to feel again her old dread of the new mother and to wonder how one so inferior as herself would impress so much superiority. The next day there came a telegram from their father, who was in Richmond and would be home the following evening at six o'clock. There was also a letter from Jack, who wrote hurriedly:

"DEAR FAN AND ANN. *Veni, vidi, vici.* Brush up your Latin and translate, but make it third person, with *she*, instead of first. To be brief: I called at the Spotswood this evening, and looking over the register, as I often do, saw in your father's handwriting 'Dr. Samuel Hathern and wife, Lovering, Va.' In a jiff I sent up my card, and in another jiff I was shaking hands with Mrs. Hathern, who received me as if I were her son, or brother, and nearly looked me through with those eyes of hers which see

everything. Whether they are black or blue, white or gray, I can't tell, but I think they are black. You can't get away from them; they follow you like the eyes of some portraits I have seen,—my grandmother's for instance, which hangs in our dining-room. I never could steal a lump of sugar or poke my thumb into the honey pot because she was always looking at me. Just so with Mrs. Hathern. She lights on you and holds you and seems to be going clear down to a fellow's boots and reading his inmost thoughts. She is handsome and stylish and had on the best fitting dress I ever saw. Looked as if she were run into it. I've no doubt she is a blood relation of Miles Standish and all the other chaps who came over in the Mayflower. She is very dignified but not exactly like our Southern ladies. Maybe it is her voice, which is strong and full and decided, and would make you jump if you were doing anything bad. To-morrow I am to have the honor of driving with her around the town and showing her the nakedness of the land, and I assure you it is very naked. I could shed buckets full of tears over the ruins of our once fair city, but it's no good crying for spilt milk. Better go to work and get some more. She wishes to go first to Libby Prison. Think of it! I a Reb, and she a Fed, hob-nobbing in that place. She must have forgotten herself when she said to me with so much concern in her voice, 'I trust you were never so unfortunate as to be a prisoner there.'

"I think even Fan would have been pleased with my dignified manner as I replied, 'Madam, I had the honor to wear the grey, and there was no possibility of my being a prisoner in Libby.'

"'Oh, I beg your pardon,' she said, with a look which made me feel like a cut-throat and murderer, and as if I ought to have been in Libby, or some worse place, all my life.

"Then her eyes lighted up and a most wonderful smile broke out over her face, changing its expression entirely. I think that smile must have won your father. It made even me feel kind of so-so,—queer-like, you know. He

seems very proud and fond of her. Calls her 'Matty,' and once when she thought I did not hear her she called him 'Sam'!"

"Disgusting!" Fan exclaimed. "Sam! our father, Dr. Hathern! Sam, indeed! I knew she was vulgar, with all of her Standish blood. Sam! The idea!"

After this Fan had scarcely patience to finish the letter, which had but little more in it of the bride.

The next morning the young ladies were up betimes. As a rule they were not early risers, especially when their father was away. Nine and even ten o'clock sometimes found them in bed, while Phyllis kept their breakfast warm and made no signs of protest, unless there was a greater amount of work than usual and she was very tired. Then to herself she would call them *onery* and *shiffless*, and wonder what their poor mother would say if she knew how no-count they were, lyin' bed hours after sun-up. The morning after the receipt of the telegram, however, they were up with the sun and found Phyllis preparing the most appetizing breakfast she could think of, and occasionally wiping away a big tear before it dropped from her nose.

"De po' lambs should have one more meal in peace before the missus come," she said, as she served her cream toast and corn muffins and urged them to eat.

Katy was the only one who did justice to the muffins and toast. Fanny and Annie could only make a pretense of eating, and when breakfast was over Fanny said with a hysterical laugh, "I am going to the graves to tell mother and Charlie and the boy who is coming to-day. I don't believe they know."

A moment later she was walking rapidly across the field to the hillside cemetery, where she staid for a long time.

What she said to the dead, if anything, no one ever knew. When she came back there were traces of tears on her face, but otherwise she was calm.

"Do you know," she said to Annie, "that the boy seems very near to me this morning. I can see his great blue eyes looking wistfully at me as they did when he said 'Don't let her find me.' Do as I will, they follow me as if they wanted to tell me something."

Annie was accustomed to her sister's theory that the dead are cognizant of what interests us, and only shivered a little as she replied, "I am glad I am not haunted with dead eyes. It is enough to think of the living ones which Jack says see everything, and will be sure to know if these rooms are not in order."

Annie, who was more practical and more housewifely in her instincts than Fanny, was already at work and had brought from the garden and yard quantities of flowers,—roses and peonies and snow-balls and lilies,—which lay heaped upon the dining-room table, with every vase and bowl and available pitcher in the house. Fan's forte was decoration, and she at once went to work with a will, fashioning the flowers into bouquets and whistling as she worked, sometimes Dixie, and sometimes John Brown's Body, which last she said was probably the bride's favorite. If the boy's eyes haunted her they acted as a stimulant, urging her on until the house was full of flowers and odorous with perfume. The last room visited was Charlie's, where the uniforms of grey and blue were hanging, over one the stars and stripes,—over the other, the stars and bars. This was a sacred spot. Fan never whistled there, nor sung, and she stepped softly and spoke low as she put the bowl of forget-me-nots on the stand under the faded coats, where the bloodstains of Charley and the

boy were showing. It seemed to her that many eyes were upon her now, and she began to feel nervous as she gently patted the pillow over which Charlie's head used to lie, and where the boy's had lain when he shouted a *tiger* for her, and died.

"Poor boy!" she said to herself, as she left the room, "Had you no friends, and shall we never know who you were, or where you came from?"

After the early dinner they laid the table for supper, bringing out the best linen and china and glass, wondering where the mother would choose to sit that first night. It had been Annie's prerogative to preside over the coffee urn. This must, of course, eventually be given up, and might as well be done first as last. So the Dresden plate, the one pearl handled knife and fork, both heirlooms from their grandmother, and kept mostly to look at, were put with the tea-cups and saucers, and the arm-chair their mother and Katy's had used was wheeled to its place. For a moment both Fanny and Annie stood by it with a hand upon it, while Annie said, "I wonder if mother knows or cares."

"Knows! Yes," Fanny replied, "but does not care. In Heaven they neither marry nor are given in marriage, so, what is it to her if father brings home as many wives as the Mormons,—four at once, I have heard. It is only we that care."

When everything was in readiness the sisters went all over the house, feeling a kind of pride in it, with its wide hall in the centre, its two large rooms on either side, and its broad piazza, shaded with honeysuckles, clematis and woodbine, and a beautiful wild rose or eglantine, struggling with the three and throwing out masses of color against the dark leaves of its neighbors. It was an ideal Virginia

home, and the Boston woman, with all her culture and views and advanced ideas must find it so, the sisters thought as they finished their inspection and sat down to wait for the train. Katy, who had been as much interested in the preparations as any one, had made two small bouquets which she put on her father's bureau, with a card under each. On one was scrawled in a child's almost illegible hand, "For papa, from Katy;" on the other, "From Katy to Mamma." She was happy, and in her white dress and blue sash, with her fair hair falling around her shoulders in soft curls she made a lovely picture as she flitted from room to room, now consulting the kitchen clock, now the one in the dining-room and wondering if they would never come. At last the whistle was heard in the distance coming nearer and nearer and finally ceasing as the train drew up to the station. Fifteen minutes passed, seeming to the sisters an age, and the village 'bus stopped at the gate, followed by the express wagon on which were two huge Saratoga trunks, a large valise and a hat box.

"Ought we go and meet them?" Annie said, in a whisper.

"No," Fan replied. "It is enough for Katy to go."

She was running down the walk, and with a glad cry threw herself into her father's arms. Then, at a word from him, she gave her hand to the lady at his side, who stooped and kissed her. It had never yet occurred to her that every body did not love her and want her, and she held tightly to the lady on one side and to her father on the other, and so went hippite-hopping up the walk, telling them that the old cat had six kittens and the speckled hen thirteen chickens; that the house was beautiful with roses and things, and she had made two bouquets herself.

It was a very cold, callous heart which could withstand Katy, and Mrs. Hathern's face wore a soft and pleased expression as she looked down at the little girl and then up at the two young ladies who had come out upon the piazza and whom the doctor presented to her as "My daughters, Fanny and Annie."

Chapter VIII.—The Author's Story Continued.

MRS. HATHERN.

She had taught a district school in a small town in Maine,—had been preceptress in a young ladies' seminary in Calais,—a music teacher and organist in Portland,—and the wife and widow of Thomas Haverleigh, of Bangor, whom she had married mostly for his money, and for the broader field it would give her. Some years after his death she moved to Boston, where her restless, energetic nature found full scope in the many clubs and societies of which she became an active member. Her marriage with Dr. Hathern was a surprise to her friends, who knew how unlike the two were to each other. He was gentle, refined, wholly unselfish and rather weak where decided action was necessary; she strong, determined, and self-assured, with a will which no one could bend except her son Carl, and he sometimes failed. There could scarcely have been two people more unlike and possibly this dissimilarity of disposition was what attracted each to the other until both believed they were in what the lady called a middle-aged kind of love. In a letter to a friend she likened it to the Indian summer, which is often more satisfactory than the fervid heat of the real summer days. Whether it were Indian summer or June the doctor did not stop to consider.

He was infatuated and only knew that he was supremely happy and never more so than when he reached home and was presenting his bride to his daughters. They were nervous and constrained, but she was wholly at her ease, while her eyes, which Jack said saw everything, did not belie his statement. They were very large and black and bright and took the two girls in at a glance, from their heads to their feet, making them feel rather uncomfortable. Fanny thought with some uneasiness of two missing buttons on her boots, while Annie remembered a little rent in her underskirt and wondered if it were visible.

"I am glad to see you and hope we shall be friends. Which is Fanny, and which Annie?" Mrs. Hathern said, and her voice seemed to fill the whole house, it was so distinct and decided, with a tone in it which some might call an accent, but which Fan and Ann pronounced a brogue, when comparing notes with regard to it.

Had she been a public speaker she could have thrown it into the farthest corner of the largest hall, but her hearers would not have said it was a pleasant voice. It was too self-assured and too full of a conviction that the opinions it expressed were the only opinions worth expressing.

Like most cold impassive natures she was not at all demonstrative and although quick to see and speak of whatever was wrong, or out of place, she seldom praised or expressed herself pleased with anything. That she made no comment was, she thought, a sufficient proof that she did not disapprove. *Gush* was especially distasteful to her, and she was glad not to meet it in her step-daughters.

She knew they must be nervous, but they were ladylike and quiet and received her kindly. They told her which was Fanny and which Annie, saying laughingly, "we are better known as *Fan-and-Ann.*" One took her satchel,

the other her shawl, as they led the way into the house and showed her to her room. Fan, who was watching her closely, saw how rapidly her eyes traveled from one object to another, lighting finally upon an immense spider's web in a corner, which had probably been there a week, as there were two or three dead flies already in it, and a freshly captured fourth was making a loud protest against its capture.

"Can I do anything for you?" Fan asked, with a view to draw attention from the offending web.

"No, thanks, I can get along quite well by myself," was the reply, and acting upon the hint the girls left her alone and went to their father, who was seeing to the baggage, and whom they nearly knocked down as they seized him around the neck and smothered him with kisses.

"Why—why—why; bless my soul! What's all this whirlwind for? and crying, too," the Doctor said, folding them in his arms and feeling his own eyes moisten a little.

"We didn't half tell you how glad we are to have you home, and we don't mean to cry," Fan said; "and we are not going to again; but just this little minute I can't help it."

"Yes, yes; there, there," the doctor replied, patting first one head and then the other, "there's nothing to cry about, I assure you, except for joy. She's a very remarkable woman, and the wonder is that she could care for an old codger like me. We are going to be very happy, all of us. She has some elegant furniture coming, which will make the old house quite like a palace. You know you have wanted new furniture a long time."

"Oh, father," Fanny cried. "We would rather have you than all the fine furniture in the world; but we are going to be good; indeed we are."

She was hugging him again with her arms around his neck on one side of him, while Annie's were on the other, when they were startled with a call for *Sam*, which came echoing down the hall like the peal of a clarionet, making the four clinging arms drop suddenly, while the doctor struggled into an upright position and answered, "Yes, Matty, I am coming."

Mrs. Hathern had removed her bonnet and investigated the room, deciding, with a radical woman's quickness what changes she would make when her furniture came; deciding, too, that the windows had not been half washed and the window stools not at all, judging from the dust and dried leaves upon them. Then with her umbrella she demolished the big spider's web and was proceeding to attack a smaller one in the vicinity of the bell rope, which she tried with no effect, when Katy came dancing into the room, her blue eyes showing the admiration she felt for her new mamma, whose grey dress and steel buttons she began to finger caressingly.

"I like you," she said and moved by an impulse she could not resist Mrs. Hathern stooped and kissed the lovely face with something like a real mother feeling in her heart.

But nothing could change her nature, which was to discipline and mould whatever needed moulding and disciplining. So, when Katy, wishing to call attention to her gift of flowers, said to her, "Have you seen my flowers. I give 'em to you." She answered promptly, "You mean you *gave* them to me. Little girls must learn to use good grammar. Yes, I see them; they are very pretty, but be careful or you will upset the vase and spill the water; better run out now, while I make my toilet."

It was not so much the words as the tone with which

they were spoken, which brought a slight shadow to Katy's face as she started for the door, followed by Mrs. Hathern, who looked out into the hall in time to see the tableau at the farther end.

"Not as emotionless and impassive as I thought," she said to herself, understanding it perfectly, and interrupting it with her call for Sam. She was given to the use of pet names; she had called her first husband Tom, and knew no reason why she should not call her second Sam. At first he rather liked it. He had been Sam when a boy, and it made him feel young again. But when he heard it in the presence of his daughters, it sounded differently, for he felt their disapproval of it.

"I can't open my satchel," she said, when he came to her. "Something is wrong with the lock, and how can I get some hot water. I have tried the bell three times with no response."

In her voice there was something the doctor had not heard before, and, like Katy, he felt a passing shadow on his spirits, but he hastened to undo the lock of the satchel and said, apologetically: "Oh, yes, the bell. I knew the cord was broken. I will see to it at once, and the hot water, too. I'll go for Phyllis to fetch it, I haven't seen her yet."

He found Phyllis in a mood which could not be described as angelic. She had spent an hour or so in clearing up her kitchen; had mopped the floor; shoved into dark corners pots, kettles, skillets and brooms, and arrayed herself in her red flowered gown and white apron, with her highest turban on her head. If her master had come alone, she would have gone with his daughters to greet him, but with a new mistress it was not to be thought of. "She reckoned she knowed her place," she said; "whar she

was raised niggers didn't put on no a'rs. Marster would done fotch the new Misses to her, in course." But as time went by and neither mistress nor master appeared, her wrath began to wax hot and to manifest itself in her own peculiar way.

"Whar is the use," she reasoned, "clarin' up an' hidin' things whar I can't find 'em, if my lady is too fine to come inter de kitchen. No, sir! I'll jess have 'em handy agin."

Pots and kettles and skillets were brought from their hiding place and set down promiscuously on the hearth. The broom and mop followed next, and the duster was aimed at the door behind which it belonged, just escaping contact with the doctor's head as he appeared. He had heard from his daughters of Phyllis's propensity to throw things when on what they called a rampage, and concluded she was on one now.

"Ho, Phyllis," he said in his cheery way. "What's up, and why haven't you come to welcome your new mistress?"

He offered her his hand, which Phyllis grasped firmly.

"I'se mighty glad to see you, Mas'r," she said, "an' I'se gwine to do my duty, but for de dear Lord's sake whar was de sense for a new Misses. Et kind of upsots one to think of dem t'others what's dead an' gone."

This was the first real set-back the doctor had received, and it hurt his pride that his servant should disapprove of what seemed to him so desirable. But in his usual kind way he soothed the old negress, who assured him again that she meant to do her duty and *bar* everything for his sake and the young missesses. Filling a pitcher with hot water, which took a few minutes to heat, she followed him to his room, where Mrs. Hathern stood

with a hint of a cloud on her face at the long delay, and because the pitcher had a broken nose and a suspicion of pot black on the handle. She prided herself on never losing her temper to the extent of showing it in her voice or manner. In a quiet, determined way she could sting with her tongue and smile while she did it. Bowing graciously to Phyllis she said, "I thought perhaps you had forgotten the hot water, and I have washed me in cold, but you can leave the pitcher, and please wipe off that black spot which you probably did not see."

Phyllis explained, as she rubbed off the pot black, that "de water bilin' in de tea kettle was hard as rocks and not fit for ladies to wash in, an' she had to blow up the fi' to heat some soff." Then, putting the pitcher down with a thump she bounced out of the room. She had taken Mrs. Hathern's measure, and Mrs. Hathern had taken hers, and neither was very satisfactory.

"She ain't no mo' like Miss Carline or Miss Nellie than I'm like Mas'r General Lee," she said, and there was a stormy look in her eyes when she went in at last to wait upon the table, where Mrs. Hathern presided as easily as if she had all her life sat in the arm-chair she was the third to occupy.

She was a woman of theories and maxims to which she adhered rigidly. Among these were, "Early to bed and early to rise,"—"An hour in the morning is worth two at night," and so forth. Accordingly, the next morning at six o'clock she was out upon the piazza looking very cool and handsome in her gown of lavender and white, open in front to show her embroidered petticoat as was the fashion of the time. Everything about her dress and person was spotless, and she impressed one with the idea that she had just been scrubbed and ironed. Her hair was

never out of place; her collars and cuffs never soiled, or her garments crumpled or torn. Cleanliness she held next to godliness, and shiftlessness and untidiness next to sin. Born and reared amid the thrift and energy and activity of New England, she had no idea of or sympathy with the happy-go-lucky manner of living in the Hathern family, with Phyllis at its head. Hearing no stir, and seeing no signs of life in the dining-room, except a few flies busy with some crumbs left on the cloth the night before, she found her way to the kitchen, where Phyllis was very leisurely making preparations for breakfast. Later on, before presenting herself at the table, she was intending to don her Sunday apparel, but now, as the morning was very hot, her dress might be described as decolleté. A faded calico skirt, which scarcely reached her bare ankles, and a loose, thin sacque which showed all the creases and curves of her portly figure, comprised her entire make-up as she stood with her back to the door, stirring her batter for griddle cakes, and all unconscious of the foe bearing down upon her.

With a warning cough Mrs. Hathern stepped across the threshold, so startling the old negress that she dropped the egg she was about to break into the batter.

"Oh, my Lord, how you done skeered me," she exclaimed, lifting both hands, in one of which was the dripping spoon. "Does you want anything, honey?"

Phyllis was very religious, and a leader at the meetings held in some of the freedmen's cabins, where pandemonium usually reigned and the Lord was entreated as if he were deaf, or asleep. She had attended one of these the previous night, and on her way home had told a crony whom she met how she had *rassled* in pra'r, and had asked others to rassel, too, that she might have grace to do her duty.

As a result of her *rassling* she was in quite a conciliatory frame of mind, and the word *honey* came from her involuntarily.

"I am not one of the young ladies, I am Mrs. Hathern," the latter said, holding up her dainty skirts as she walked around the broken egg and the pots and kettles which Phyllis had not yet put away. "What time do you usually have breakfast?" she asked, and Phyllis replied, "Oh, we ain't perticular, mos' any time when dey gits up, —eight, nine,—sometimes ten,—jess as happens."

Mrs. Hathern looked aghast. Such habits as these she was not prepared for, and she would not allow them either.

"Very well," she said, "that may have answered in the past; for the future we will have breakfast in the summer at seven, sharp,—and at eight in the winter."

In Phyllis's astonishment the second egg, which she had brought from the cupboard, was in danger of following its companion.

"In de Lord's name, how's you gwine to git de young ladies up, or marster, either so airly. Why, it'll take a hoss team to do it," she said, and Mrs. Hathern replied, "I shall see to that, and you will see to the breakfast until my cook comes, when she will take your place."

Phyllis bridled at once and her turban began to topple on one side. But she remembered her duty, and asked, very respectfully, "When is she comin'?"

"Very soon, I hope, and a housemaid with her,—both capable servants, who are accustomed to keep everything in order. The sight of your kitchen would drive them crazy. Do you always cook by a fireplace? Have you no stove?"

Phyllis snorted,—a sure sign that she was forgetting her duty.

"Stove!" she repeated. "One dem squar' black things, a burnin' and blisterin' your han's! No sir! Ole Miss Fullerton done got one before de wah, and dat fool of a Rache buil'd de fi' in de oven, an when de smoke an' de fi' bust out, she screeched so dat Mas'r Hathern went over an' put it out, an' tole 'em whar to make de fi'. He's from de norf, whar all such truck as stoves comes from, an' he larf fit to split his sides when he seen de fi' in de oven. No, sir! No stove for me!"

"Such shiftlessness!" was Mrs. Hathern's mental comment, as she went back to the piazza where she found her husband, and sat down to wait for breakfast with what patience she could command and to think how she could best change the habits of this "sozzling household."

That was what she called it in the first letter she wrote her son, telling him to go at once to her house and expedite the departure of Norah and Julina. He was also to order the best range in Boston and have it sent to her immediately, with all necessary furnishing.

"Think of a big fireplace," she wrote, "with a crane and tin ovens and pots and kettles and spiders and the water pail, with a gourd on the top, all in a clutter, and a huge negress, weighing at least two hundred, standing in the midst, with nothing on but a short petticoat and loose sacque! That is what I found the first morning when I went to the kitchen to see if breakfast were ready. We didn't have it until eight o'clock, and that was too early for Miss Fanny, who did not appear until we were nearly through. I have ordered it for seven hereafter. I cannot begin too soon to change the loose habits the girls have acquired from having had so many blacks to wait upon them before the war, and depending wholly upon Phyllis since. She almost breathes for them, and they let her. To do her

justice she looks very respectable when she comes into the dining-room and she waits at table remarkably well. It is a very pleasant, roomy house, with wide verandas above and below, broad hall in the centre, with fireplace in one corner, and doors opening at either end. But it is greatly run down,—old, faded carpets and rickety furniture—and in the bedroom I intend for you a broken-legged bureau, propped up on a brick. We should call this second class at the north, but they are really among the first people in the town, and don't seem to know how dilapidated they are, or if they do they are too proud to show it. I refer now to the girls. The Doctor admits that things are not quite as they ought to be. He is a thorough gentleman, and I am more and more convinced of the wisdom of my choice. Fanny and Annie are bright, pretty girls, especially Fanny, who is the ruling spirit and mouth-piece for her sister. Katy, the youngest, is a beauty, but spoiled. I do not think she knows what restraint is, but I must restrain her, and mould her as a child should be moulded. She will then make a splendid woman. The twins are, I fear, beyond my control. Fanny certainly is, and there is a fire in her black eyes I should not care to rouse. I forgot to tell you that there is a wide lawn in front of the house, with a long avenue leading to the street, shaded with elms and maples. The garden is full of flower beds bordered with old fashioned box, and there are roses and honeysuckles and running vines everywhere. In the rear a grassy lane leads to the woods, which at times during the war were full of soldiers, both northern and southern. The war still broods like a plague over Virginia, although I cannot help feeling that some of the people make it an excuse for what is only the result of years of indolence and indifference to anything like thrift and energy."

Carl's answer to this letter was prompt and characteristic. "I went to the house," he wrote, "meeting Julina in the street. She informed me that Miss O'Rourke was giving a lunch to some of her friends, and had sent her after oil for the salad. So you see, 'when the cat's away the mice will play.' Norah seemed as meek as Moses when she saw me, and if a lunch was in progress she gave no sign of it. Perhaps Julina lied; it's like her. Miss O'Rourke informed me that after getting the house ready for the new tenant, she must visit her grandmother and 'rest up' before going south, and Julina will 'rest up' with her. So I don't know when you will see their ladyships. What a delightful picture you give of the Elms. Double piazzas, wide hall, big rooms, avenues, gardens, roses and woods, to say nothing of pots and kettles and pans and a 200-pounder, all huddled together in the kitchen, and a bureau propped up with a brick! I like that. It reminds me of our first visit to the sea shore, with a cottage full of broken furniture, and so leaky that when it rained we had to set with washtubs over our heads. What a field you have in which to exercise your executive ability and love of change; but don't go to bossing little Katy, or make her sit in chairs and go to bed without her supper, as you did me, and don't introduce that new order of 'early to bed and early to rise' until I have had a chance to enjoy the old easy-going régime you hold in so much contempt. Let the girls sleep, if they want to. I remember how you used to snake Paul and me out of bed at the most unearthly hours until he ran away, and I got weakly and the doctor told you I must have all the sleep I could get. How I hated the early bird which caught the worm, or rather the worm for getting up to be caught. I am going to like the girls,

and shall probably fall in love with all three; that's my way, you know. Perhaps Katy is too young. Eight isn't she? while the twins are eighteen. I am nearly sixteen, am five feet ten and trying to raise a beard. Not an infant, you see."

This letter was not altogether satisfactory to Mrs. Hathern, whose usual smooth brow was somewhat wrinkled and whose voice and manner had an increase of energy and decision when she went back to the posse of negroes at work in different parts of the house. There was a great upheaval in progress, which Annie, who was an eye-witness to it in all its details, will describe in another chapter.

Chapter IX.—Annie's Story.

THE UPHEAVAL.

My coadjutor, the Author, has told how the new mother came home to us on a lovely May afternoon, when we had made the old house bright with flowers and schooled ourselves to receive her as our father's wife should be received by his daughters. We had heard she was a remarkable woman and a handsome woman, and we were not disappointed. She was handsome, with the brightest and blackest eyes I ever saw,—dark, glossy hair,—not one of which ever dared get out of place,—brilliant complexion and regular features, if I except her nose, which inclined upward a little, and her chin, which receded in proportion as her nose went up. And she was remarkable, too, and so different from any type of woman we had ever seen that she took our breath away,

and for a few days we were in a state of collapse and bewilderment. She was a highly educated woman, bristling all over with views and theories and maxims, one of which was "never to let the grass grow under her feet, if there was anything to do." And she didn't let it grow, but plunged at once into the midst of a domestic cyclone, which not only swept away for the time being all our comfort, but, also, the good opinions we had entertained of ourselves as housekeepers and young ladies of judgment.

We had never dreamed that we were as shiftless and no account and dilapidated a set as we came to believe ourselves in the new light shed upon us and our surroundings. We knew that our furniture was old and our carpets worn, but we had a pride in and an affection for them because they had belonged to our mother, and we thought the house was clean, and we told Mrs. Hathern so when she suggested a regular tear up such as was customary in New England twice a year. For answer to our assertion that we had been scrubbed from attic to cellar she smiled a pitying kind of smile at our ignorance, and rubbing her hand over the top of a door brought off an amount of black which appalled us. We had never thought of looking on the top of doors for dirt. But her eyes went everywhere, and she went with them and wrote against us "weighed in the balance and found wanting." Everything was wrong, especially in the kitchen, where, she said, Norah O'Rourke would not stay a day. Privately, Fan and I thought she was more than half afraid of Norah O'Rourke, whom she quoted so constantly and for whom it seemed to us our hitherto quiet house was turned inside out. Two carpenters were brought into the kitchen, where an extra window was cut so that Norah O'Rourke could have more light and air; a new cupboard was built

for Norah O'Rourke's iron utensils, which Phyllis had kept anywhere, so that they were handy; there was a sink for Norah O'Rourke's dish-washing, and stationary tubs for Norah O'Rourke's laundrying. The ceiling was whitewashed; the walls painted a light drab and the floor snuff color, and when everything was in readiness for Norah O'Rourke, except the range which had not come, that lady's quarters were certainly a great improvement upon the dark, dingy room where Phyllis had reigned supreme so long.

Just what her position in the household was to be when Norah O'Rourke arrived we did not know, as Mrs. Hathern was reticent on that point. That she didn't like Phyllis, and Phyllis didn't like her, was an assured fact, but there was as yet no open rupture between them. Mrs. Hathern was evidently trying to control her temper, while Phyllis was conscientiously striving to do her duty. I think she *rassled* in *pra'r* at the night meetings a great many times during the toss up, which extended from the kitchen to the house proper, where, as Fan wrote to Jack, "The old Harry held high carnival." Had I then read Jane Carlyle's life and letters, as I have since, I should have sympathized with her fully in her despair and discomposure when her lord came home full of bile and raised Cain generally. As it was with that house at No. 5 Cheyne Row, so it was with our house under the Elms. Carpets came up, curtains came down, furniture was banished to the attic to make room for the new that was coming. Paper was torn from the walls and lay in long mouldy strips upon the floor. Pails of suds, with mops and brooms and brushes and four colored women who had been pressed into service in order to expedite matters, were everywhere, together with plumbers and painters

and upholsterers and paper-hangers brought from Richmond to assist in the mélee.

In her cambric dress and white apron, which never showed a particle of soil, and a dainty little cap, with a lavender bow, perched on the top of her head, Mrs. Hathern moved among her forces like a brigadier-general, urging them on as they had never been urged before in their lives. The women, however, baffled her. They were not accustomed to the Yankee quick step, and if she left one washing a window while she went to look after another, she was very apt on her return to find the window washer setting in a rocking chair or rummaging through a bureau drawer. Dire were the complaints she made about the blacks. She was a rank abolitionist during the war, she said, but if she had known what a good-for-nothing race they were, she shouldn't have troubled herself about them, and she'd like nothing better now than to thrash them if she could. But they were free and her *ekles* one of them told her during a hot controversy over a window which was washed three times before it suited.

Had there been nothing except a battle between Boston energy and Virginia slowness, Fan and I might have enjoyed it, knowing that out of the confusion order would finally come, but a more serious matter was daily confronting us in the shape of little Katy's misdemeanors. We never knew before that she had any, but now we found that of all children to get into mischief and tear her clothes she was the worst. She enjoyed the commotion and was always in the thickest of it. Naturally she soiled her dress and apron and hands, for which she was promptly reproved and punished. Sometimes she was made to sit for an hour or more in a high chair near the bureau in father's bedroom. For diversion she was told

to commit either the collect for the day, or several verses in the Bible, beginning with the sermon on the mount, the number of verses varying according to the heinousness of her offense. Sometimes, if the rent in her dress were longer and the soil worse than usual, she was sent to bed and kept there until morning supperless, unless Phyllis surreptitiously conveyed a paper parcel into her window by standing on a stool and using a pitchfork. Once, when overcome with sleep, she fell off the chair and was only saved a hard blow on her head by the open Bible which fell under it. Then Fan interfered, and holding the sobbing child in her arms appealed to her father, asking if so much discipline were necessary.

During the war father had never been quite sure on which side he stood, and now he was equally undecided, until Mrs. Hathern said, in that cool, rasping voice, which always irritated me, "My dear, I am sorry to be the cause of any trouble between you and your daughters, but really you must decide at once which is to take charge of Katy, Miss Fanny or myself. The child is a dear little creature, but needs restraining. Sitting in a chair, or lying in bed, does not hurt her physically. I always corrected Carl that way, and——"

She stopped suddenly as if she had left some name unsaid, and it seemed to me that she flushed a little.

Her hand was on father's arm rubbing a speck of dirt she saw there, as she waited for his answer.

"Yes, certainly, certainly," he said, hesitatingly, "Katy is our baby, and I suppose we have spoiled her; naturally it is a mother's place to take charge of her. Be as easy with her as you can, and you, Katy, be good."

So Katy was ordered back to the chair until she had committed all the Blesseds which she did not already know

in the sermon on the mount. There was only one of these and she was soon at liberty, and as she had the sunniest nature I ever knew she was in a few minutes at her play again under the Elms, making believe she was in church singing the grand old Te Deum with that clear, wonderful voice which made the workmen stop to listen, while Mrs. Hathern said to us, "Miss Errington was right. Katy has great capabilities. I know something of music myself, and when my piano comes I shall take her in hand."

"May the Lord help Katy if the madam takes her in hand more than she has already done," Fan said to me when we were alone and she could give vent to her wrath. "I tell you what it is, father is an imbecile and she is a tyrant, and I won't stand it. I'll marry Col. Errington. You'll see."

Chapter X.—Annie's Story Continued.

A SUSPICION.

It was five weeks since Mrs. Hathern came home, and late June was queening it over the woods and hills of Lovering, and the lawn and the garden were full of flowers and beauty. The house, with its new coat of paint, was quite another place from the one we had known from childhood. Then it was brown and weather stained; now it was white, with green blinds, and looked very clean and fresh and cool in the summer sunlight, with the luxurious vines clinging to its sides and the huge columns of the piazzas. Inside the change was greater still. Plumbers, painters, upholsterers, carpenters and negroes had departed. The furniture had come and we

scarcely knew ourselves with our carpets of Brussels and moquette, our sofas and chairs of brocade and rosewood, our long mirrors and lace draperies, and, more than all, the costly paintings which in their Florentine frames adorned the walls of the drawing-room and hall. We were very fine, and our neighbors came in crowds to see and admire and congratulate us upon our prosperity Mrs. Hathern had plenty of money and spent it lavishly upon us all, and there is no doubt that we were really greatly improved in every way by the introduction of Boston standards and Boston ways. But on Fan's part and mine there was always a regret for the good old easy-going times when things were at haphazard and we did as we pleased, with no one but Phyllis to dictate to us. She was still doing her duty, but doing it in a cabin across the back yard. The range had come and had been set up, and Mrs. Hathern had done her best to initiate Phyllis into its mysteries. But either she couldn't or wouldn't learn, and in despair she had been allowed to carry her pots and kettles and skillets and ovens to the cabin, where there was a fireplace in which she could potter as she pleased, until the arrival of Miss Norah O'Rourke, who understood the range in all its ramifications. She was still visiting her grandmother and *resting up*, but she was expected in a few days, together with Julina, in whom Fan and I felt considerable interest as the girl who had made love to Carl. He, too, was expected soon and had sent on a box containing a most heterogenous collection, which he had called his Lares and Penates,—fishing tackle, bathing suits, an air-gun, a student's cap, sporting pictures cut from sporting papers, old books and photographs, and some handkerchiefs and gloves which were never bought for him and in which there still lingered a delicate perfume,—

the whole not worth the cost of the express, his mother said.

But she unpacked them carefully and put them in his room, the pleasantest bedchamber in the house and the one we had always used for guests. This she appropriated without consulting us. Indeed, she had never consulted us but once and that, with regard to the disposition of some of the old furniture, the piano and the pictures of our mother and Katy's. These last had hung in father's room, where he could see them the last thing at night and the first thing in the morning, and we had prided ourselves upon them because they were fair likenesses of the sweet-faced women who had once reigned as mistresses at the Elms and because they were our only oils.

"They may be good likenesses, but they are badly done,—mere daubs," Mrs. Hathern said, when calling our attention to them by asking where we would like to have them put. The space they occupied was wanted for her own portrait, life-size, taken in Paris and gorgeous in cream satin, low neck and pearls. "Three Mrs. Hatherns in one husband's bed-chamber are too many," she said, and we agreed with her and removed the daubs to our own room, where we were sitting when Carl's box was being unpacked.

Katy was looking on and prattling constantly, while her stepmother occasionally reproved her for being so curious and asking so many questions. Something was wanted from below stairs and Mrs. Hathern went to fetch it, leaving Katy alone. A moment after the child came running to us with two photographs which she had found in a book. One, the freshest and newest, was that of a bright, handsome boy of twelve or thirteen, with a happy, laughing expression in his brown eyes which told of a sunny disposition

and perfect content with life as he found it. The other was the picture of a boy two or three years older, with something the same features, but a worried, anxious expression as if life were not all a holiday. That they were related we were sure, and that one was a poor relation we felt equally sure.

"Carl," I said to Fan, indicating the younger face.

"Yes, Carl," she answered, but her gaze was riveted upon the other,—the sad, browbeaten face,—whose great wide open blue eyes looked into ours with a wistful, pleading expression we had seen somewhere and could not recall. "Who is he, and what makes me feel as if I were looking upon some body dead?" Fan asked just as the soft swish of Mrs. Hathern's gown was heard and she appeared at the door, saying in the low tone which always made Katy shiver and think of the high chair, "Katy, did you take two photographs from Carl's room?"

"Yes, mamma. I wanted to show 'em to Fan and Ann," Katy said, reaching her hand to us for them.

I gave mine up, saying as I did so, "This I am sure is Carl. He is a very handsome boy."

But Fan kept hers, fascinated by the mournful eyes which held her as the Ancient Mariner held his unwilling hearer.

"Yes, this is Carl, and he is a handsome boy," Mrs. Hathern replied, taking the photograph from me.

"And who is this?" Fan asked, surrendering hers at last.

I did not think of it then, but it came to me afterwards that Mrs. Hathern's voice was not quite natural as she replied, "That is Carl's cousin Paul, who once lived with us."

"Where is he now?" was Fan's next question, and

Mrs. Hathern replied, "I don't know. I think he is dead. He went to the war, and never came back."

She left the room and we were alone, as Katy had already gone. We were sitting near an open window looking north, and simultaneously our eyes went across the field to the hillside cemetery where the headstones of Charlie and The Boy showed white amid the growth of flowering shrubs and fragrant evergreens; then they came back and confronted each other with a questioning look of terror and surprise. Fan was the first to speak. Leaning forward she whispered to me, "Mrs. Hathern is Aunt Martha!"

"Yes," I said. "She *is* Aunt Martha," and I felt myself grow faint and sick as I said it.

We had conceived such a contempt for the woman whose image had haunted our dying boy's pillow that the shock was very great when we learned that she was with us, a part of us, our father's wife. We felt more and more sure of it as we recalled the few words The Boy had dropped with regard to himself. When we asked his name he had said he was one of the Apostles, and that was Paul. He had spoken of a Carlyle as younger than himself.

That was Carl, and there seemed nothing wanting to complete the chain of evidence except to know Mrs. Hathern's real name. From the window we saw father in the lane mounting his horse preparatory to visiting a patient.

Slipping down the back stairs Fan went up to him and after stroking the horse's neck a moment said, "By the way, father, what is Mrs. Hathern's real name? You call her Matty. Is it Matilda?" "No, child, Martha. I thought you knew," was the reply, and in a moment Fan was back again, pirouetting around the room and beating the air as if she were crazy.

"She is Aunt Martha!" she exclaimed. "I don't wonder he said he would never go back to her. How long do you suppose she kept him sitting in chairs like she does Katy?"

"Until he was glued to them," I answered, and she continued, "It is horrible, horrible! I think I hate her. What will she say, I wonder, when she knows that Paul died here with us? And she shall know it. Snowdon's knight never longed more earnestly to stand face to face with Rhoderic Dhu than I long to tell her The Boy's story."

Chapter XI.—Annie's Story Continued.

AUNT MARTHA.

There were two halls on the upper floor of our house, one long and wide and running from north to south, the other, shorter and narrower, turned off at right angles, running east and west. Opening from this hall was Charlie's room in which no change had been made since The Boy died. Three or four times a year Phyllis washed the linen and made the bed up fresh and clean, while Fan and I swept and dusted the unused chamber, which had become a kind of Bethel to us. If Mrs. Hathern had attacked it during the upheaval we were prepared to do battle. But she did not, and with no suspicion of the danger threatening it we were going down the narrow hall to an outside piazza when we saw the door open and heard voices inside, Mrs. Hathern's and Phyllis's, the latter pitched high as if in fierce altercation, and the former low but very determined. Crossing the threshold we

found Phyllis, straightened back with her hands on her hips, her usual attitude of defiance, and her turban nearly off her head.

"You can't have dis yer room," she was saying. "It's Mas'r Charlie's, and whar the Boy died; dems de berry piller slips he died on; nobody has done slep here since and neber will till de day of judgment. Thar's 'nuff oder rooms plenty good for July or any other white truck from de norf."

"What is all this?" Fanny asked, addressing Mrs. Hathern, who replied, "I am glad you have come to teach this insolent negro her place. I am not accustomed to such opposition from a servant, and cannot allow it. I am wanting a room for Julina, who will be here in a few days. This suits me. But when I told Phyllis to clear it up and remove those old soldier clothes, which are only gathering moths, she refused outright and commenced a rigmarole about Mas'r Charlie and some *Boy* which I cannot comprehend. Perhaps you can enlighten me."

Turning to Phyllis Fan said, "You can go. I will explain to Mrs. Hathern." Then to the latter, "I am sorry that Phyllis should be disrespectful to you, but she is right about the room. No one can occupy it. It was my brother Charlie's and the Boy's, whose memory is almost as dear to us as my brother's. These which you call old clothes were Charlie's. You know, perhaps, that he was killed in the war."

She had crossed the room and was standing by the uniforms of blue and grey, one with the stars and bars above it, the other with the stars and stripes. Mrs. Hathern bowed stiffly and said, "I have heard so, yes; but if he was a confederate how did he happen to wear the blue, too? Did he turn traitor to his cause?"

Her manner was exasperating, and her words insulting, and I knew by the fire in Fan's eyes that she would spare no detail in the story she meant to tell.

"Traitor! Never!" she answered, hotly. "The blue belonged to the Boy."

"And who was he? the Boy is so very indefinite," Mrs. Hathern asked in the same offensive tone, which made Fan furious.

"I don't know who he was; not even his name. Let me tell you how he came to us, blood-stained and worn and frightened, and how we cared for him till he died, and then you will know why this room is doubly sacred to us," Fan said.

"Certainly, if you like; it must be interesting; but please be brief as possible, as I am in a hurry," was Mrs. Hathern's provoking remark, and seating herself upon the bed, she prepared to listen, with a bored expression upon her face.

Fan's blood was up, and the sight of the woman whom she believed to be Aunt Martha sitting so serene and unconcerned on the bed, where thoughts of her had terrorized the dying boy, roused her beyond quiet endurance.

"Mrs. Hathern," she said, "please do not sit there. It hurts me as much as if you were sitting on the Boy's grave."

Mrs. Hathern smiled derisively. "I am very comfortable and not at all superstitious. So I think I'll stay, as I am rather tired. I shall not hurt your Boy," she said, putting the pillow under her head and leaning back against the headboard

I wish I could paint a picture of Fan's white face and dark gleaming eyes, as in words more eloquent than I can write she told the story of the Boy, beginning at Fredericks-

burg and coming down to the day when he came to Phyllis's cabin, bedraggled and worn, with a hunted look in his eyes and pathetic entreaty in his voice as he begged us sometimes not to let the soldiers get him, and again not to let his Aunt Martha know where he was, as he could not go back to her. Fan had taken the boy's letter from the blue coat pocket where it was kept and had read it, while Mrs. Hathern's face softened as I did not suppose it could soften, and there was something like moisture in her eyes. But she kept her place upon the bed until Fan told of the few hints the boy had given of his antecedents.

"In his delirium," she said, "he talked of Carlyle, who, I think, was his cousin,—of a dog whose name was Don,—and of an Aunt Martha, who could not have been kind to him, he seemed so afraid of her and so anxious that she should not know where he was. If you could have seen his poor wasted face and sunken eyes upon the pillow on which you are lying, you would know why this room is like a grave and why we cannot let a stranger occupy it."

At the mention of the wasted face and sunken eyes which had lain upon the pillow Mrs. Hathern started as if she had been stung, or had felt the cold touch of the dead face Fan described so vividly. Crossing the room she put one hand caressingly upon the blue coat, and wiping the tears from her eyes with the other she said, "I thank you for your kindness to the northern boy, and shall not forget it. Did you never learn his name?"

"Never," Fan replied. "We asked him what it was, and he said he was one of the Apostles. That is all we know for sure. We advertised and wrote to the town in Maine which he mentioned in his delirium, but nothing definite could be learned except that a strange boy call-

ing himself Joseph Wilde had enlisted in that place early in the war and had not been heard of since. Charlie called him *the Boy*. We have called him *the Boy* ever since, and it is so engraved upon his tombstone. After he died Phyllis and I cut two or three curls from his head for his friends, if we ever found them, and I put them in Charlie's letter. He had soft brown hair, with a reddish tinge in some lights, and it had grown very long for a boy. See——?" and she held up the rings of hair which twined around and clung to her fingers.

"Yes, I see," Mrs. Hathern said in a trembling voice, and I fancied that she recoiled from the hair as if it had been a living thing confronting her with reproaches. "I understand now your feelings with regard to this room and respect them. It shall not be disturbed. I can find another for Julina," she continued; "and now, if you will excuse me, I will go. I think I hear your father."

She was herself again, cold, dignified and stiff, but gave no sign that she was the Aunt Martha we had been anxious to find. We were sure of it, however, and if anything had been wanting to confirm us in our suspicions we had it the next morning, which was Sunday. As was our custom on that day we went after breakfast with flowers to the cemetery, and found a small bouquet on Charlie's grave, and on the boy's a larger one, while the grass which was long had been trampled down by some one kneeling or sitting upon it

"Aunt Martha has been here," Fan said. "I really think she has something human about her after all, but I should like her better if she'd say square out 'I am Aunt Martha.' I hate concealments."

On our return to the house we passed the cabin where Phyllis sat on a wash-bench in the shade, shelling peas for dinner.

"Mrs. Hathern done got ahead of you," she said, running her hands through the peas and letting them drop back into the pan. "She was out before sun up, pickin' de flowers, and went holdin' her white petticoats mos' up to her knees cross de lot to de cemetry, whar she went down face fo'most on de Boy's grave, an' when she comed back her eyes was all red and watery. Like 'nuff she's some of his kin."

It was scarcely possible that Phyllis suspected anything. If she did, she kept it to herself. Neither did Mrs. Hathern give any sign that she knew aught of the boy, whom, to each other, we began to speak of as Paul, while she was always Aunt Martha.

Chapter XII.—Annie's Story Continued.

NORAH O'ROURKE AND JULINA.

SUITABLE room had been found for Julina very near Norah O'Rourke's, and we were anxiously awaiting their arrival, when one evening as we sat at the tea-table the village 'bus drove into the yard, loaded on the top with baggage and filled inside, it seemed to me, with big hats and feathers and ribbons. Nothing doubting that we were about to be favored with some of Mrs. Hathern's grand Boston friends I was wondering if Phyllis would be equal to the emergency and lamenting that Norah O'Rourke and Julina were not at their posts, when Mrs. Hathern sprang up, exclaiming, as she started from the room, "Norah and Julina." Father was not at home, and in his absence Phyllis, who was waiting on the table, felt at liberty to express herself with comparative freedom.

"Oh, my Lord! I s'posed in course 'twas some quality. Look-a-dar, will you?" she said, as she nodded her high turban at the scene transpiring outside.

Norah O'Rourke, gorgeous in purple traveling dress, and big brown hat trimmed with green ribbons and feathers, had alighted, and Mrs. Hathern, who had never shown herself at all demonstrative, was kissing her, as she told her how glad she was to see her.

"My Lord, my Lord, that I should live to see Mas'r Hathern's wife kiss a white nigger! What will de wah fotch us next!" Phyllis exclaimed, and setting down the teapot, from which she was filling my cup, she disappeared in the direction of her cabin, out of sight of what she considered a familiarity beneath the dignity of Mas'r Hathern's family.

Full of curiosity Fan and I watched the group with open-eyed wonder, deciding that Norah O'Rourke was rather a formidable personage, of whom we might stand in awe, and that Julina was airy and pert, but very graceful, and dressed in much better taste than her companion. Brought up as we had been among the negroes, we had never seen a white servant in our lives and knew nothing of the relation they held to their employers. That they were more than slaves and less than equals we supposed, but we were not prepared for the familiarity with which Mrs. Hathern greeted Norah and Julina. She did not kiss the latter, but she kept hold of her hand as she conducted them into the house and up to their rooms, while Norah, in her rich Irish brogue, declared Virginia the most god-forsaken country she was ever in, and Richmond the most tumble-down-hole, and herself played out generally with her long journey in cars which Boston wouldn't put cattle in.

That night they took their supper in the dining-room and Mrs. Hathern waited upon them, while Phyllis nursed her wrath in her kitchen under the dogwood trees, where later on I found a great many cooking utensils thrown around promiscuously,—flatirons, gourds, tin dippers, and brooms,—a sure sign of the tempest which had been raging in the old negress's breast. At that time my sympathies were all with Phyllis, but in the light of later experience I came to see how unreasonable she was in her prejudice against both Norah and Julina, who were fair representatives of their class and who could no more understand the servility of a born slave like Phyllis than she could understand their assumption of equality with those they served. For some weeks I detested Norah for her unmistakable air of *good-as-you*. Then I began to like her so much that if she had gone away and returned to us I think I might have kissed her without any hesitancy. She had been recommended to Mrs. Hathern as honest and trusty and neat and a good cook, with a temper of her own and a strong disposition to rule the house, all of which recommendations proved true. She was most trusty and honest and a grand cook, with a temper as recommended, and she did rule the house, and ruled it so well and allowed so many privileges that Mrs. Hathern submitted to the bondage, and by making everything subservient to her wishes and raising her wages at intervals she had managed to keep her so long that she had become a part of herself and her ways, as Phyllis was a part of ourselves and our ways. I never knew before I met Norah O'Rourke that there could be so much expressed in the creak of a shoe! Her's always creaked, —sometimes more, sometimes less,—and after a little I could tell by the sound exactly the mood she was in. If

her foot came down heavy and strong, even Mrs. Hathern avoided her; if the tread was medium she ventured to issue her orders; but when she had on her felt slippers, as we designated her softest tread, she was like clay in our hands, to be moulded at our will. We all stood a little in fear of her, and father said, laughingly, that he did not dare go into the kitchen without knocking for permission, if her shoes were noisy. Between her and Phyllis there was war from the first, and the two were only restrained from open battles by being kept apart as much as possible,—Phyllis on her premises under the dogwoods, where she washed and ironed and bemoaned the change which had come over her master's family, and Norah in her domain, where she concocted and served the most wonderful dishes with the skill of a trained *chéf*.

Once Fan ventured to remonstrate with her for her antagonism to Phyllis, whose many virtues she set forth in glowing colors. Norah's shoes creaked ominously as she stamped around the kitchen, while her Irish dialect, which she never used unless she was excited, came in full play.

"An' sure," she said, "you don't know what ye's talkin' about. When I'm riled, as I am a good part of the time in this haythenish counthry, I'm spilin' for a fight, and if I didn't pitch into that nagur, I should wallop you all with my *shillalah* of a tongue."

After this we let matters take their course, trying occasionally to smooth Phyllis down, when her plumage was more than usually ruffled. If she was to be credited, she *rassled* a good deal in *prar* for grace to do her duty and *not* run away.

"Niggers and Irish wouldn't mix more'n ile and water," she said, and of the two she detested July more than she

did Rory O'Rock, the name she gave to Norah. "Such a'rs," she said, "axin me to call her Juleen 'case thar's a French *axum* over her eye. What's dat ar, I'd like to know. I can't see nothin' over her eyes but dem great shaggy brush heaps. Juleen, indeed! I shall call her *July*, with her black eyes and har and face, too. 'Spec she's some nigger blood in her."

Julina's father was plain Tom Smith, of Vermont, but her mother was French, and from her the girl had inherited many of the characteristics of the race. She was very slight and would have been very pretty but for her large teeth, over which her thin lips never quite closed. Dark-eyed, dark-haired and dark-faced, with a certain airy grace of speech and manner she looked the French maid fully, especially in the little caps which she wore so jauntily, but wore unwillingly. They were badges of servitude, she said, and nothing would induce her to wear them if Mrs. Hathern did not pay her extra for it. At heart she was a born anarchist, and although she performed her duties as housemaid thoroughly she hated them, and let Fan and me know that she did, talking sometimes in English and sometimes in French, which she had learned from her mother, and hurled with great volubility at both Norah and Phyllis when engaged in a spirited encounter.

She made no secret to us of her dislike of Mrs. Hathern, but she adored Carl, and her eyes lighted up with a strange brilliancy when she spoke of him. He was expected very soon and no one seemed more anxious for his coming than Julina, although she took good care not to express herself in the presence of his mother. Before her she was always respectful and modest and quiet, but to us she showed herself as she really was, and talked freely of what she meant to be,—"not a drudge to go and

come at another's bidding, but a lady, to be served as we were served." She had it in her, if her father was a poor farmer in Vermont. She had a good common-school education. She had tact and common sense. Her mother's family were somebody in France, where she meant to go when she had sufficient money, and then we'd see what she could do.

CHAPTER XIII.—ANNIE'S STORY CONTINUED.

CARL.

NOTWITHSTANDING what he had said of his anxiety to reach the Elms, he did not seem to be in a great hurry to do so. He stopped some days in New York, and again in Washington, and it was two weeks from the time he left Boston before a telegram came to his mother saying he was in Richmond and would be with us the next evening. That same day Fan had a letter from Jack, who wrote: "I was the first to make the acquaintance of Mrs. Hathern, and am also the first to know her son Carl. He has been at the Spotswood four days, and I verily believe knows more of the city than I do. He has been everywhere and seen everything, from Libby Prison, Castle Thunder and Belle Isle to the fortifications in the country for miles around. He has the most expensive room in the hotel, and drives out with a span and a guide and coachman, and myself, whenever I can find time to go out with him. He has visited the State House and every store and shop and office in town, and talked politics and reconstruction with as much assurance as if he were a gray-

haired veteran of fifty instead of a boy of fifteen or sixteen. Everybody knows him and everybody likes him, especially at the hotel, where he spends his money so freely. I usually go there every night and look over the register to see the new arrivals, and when I saw 'Carlyle Haverleigh, Boston, Mass.,' I soon had him by the hand, telling him who I was and asking what I could do for him. *Do for him!* Bless your soul, he does not need anyone to do for him; he is equal to anything; takes care of and patronizes me; owns the whole south generally, and Richmond and the Spotswood in particular. And yet he is not in the least offensive in his patronage. It is just his pleasant, genial, helpful way, which goes to your heart directly. We call him *Boston*, and laugh at his 'I guesses' and 'carnts' and 'sharnts,' and tell him he ought to be kept under a glass cover, with his fine clothes and white hands. But he takes it in perfect good humor and ridicules our 'I reckons' and 'heaps' and 'right smarts,' and says we wear baggy, ill-made clothes, and talk through our noses worse than any down-east Yankee he ever met, but admits that we are a pretty good sort, on the whole, for rebs, and much better, he presumes, for having been *licked!* Think of it! A Boston cub, right from the very heart of abolitionism and everything else, talking like that to old Virginia soldiers, who shake their sides over him. Truly the world moves, and we move with it, and I am glad we do. I like the boy, or, perhaps, I should say young man, for he is nearly as tall as I am, and straight as an Indian, with a proud bearing as if the world were made for him. He has a frank, ingenuous face, with clear-cut features, laughing eyes, and a mouth which, if it were a girl's, would not be bad to kiss! I rather think it is a kissing mouth, he is so fond of the girls,—talks to everyone

he meets in the hotel, and actually asked Mrs. Gen. Sands' daughter Mabel, from South Carolina, to take a walk with him. She took it and a blowing up, too, from her mother, when she got home, while he took a worse one for his presumption,—I'm not sure she didn't call it impudence, —in proposing such a thing to a southern girl and a stranger. You should have seen Carl then. I was really proud of him, he stood up so manly and dignified in the parlor half full of people and said, 'I beg your pardon, madam; I meant no harm, I assure you. It was because she was a southern girl that I asked her. I wanted to see if she were like Boston girls; she is very much like them, except, perhaps, more charming, because not quite so stiff. I really did not intend to be impudent. I couldn't, you know. Why, I'm a *Bostonian*, a *Haverleigh*, and a *gentleman!*'

"We all wanted to cheer, and Mrs. Sands most of all. She has been out driving with him since and taken Mabel with her. What strikes me as very remarkable about the boy is his freedom from all bad habits. I don't believe he has one, unless it is a disposition to spend his money too freely. He says he owes everything to his mother. There was some bad blood in the family away back somewhere, and she was as afraid of it as of a mad dog and watched him as a rat would watch a mouse. When he was ten years old some college chaps got him to drink and smoke until he was so deathly sick that they feared he would die. When he got over it his mother thrashed him so soundly with a rawhide that he declares he has a mark of one of the welts on his back yet. Then she told him that for every year until he was twenty-one in which he neither drank, nor smoked, nor chewed, nor swore, nor lied, she would give him one hundred dollars over and above

the allowance she usually made him. She wanted to tack on dancing and theatres, he said, but he kicked at that and promised the rest, and kept his promise, too, until last year, when he called a girl who lived with them a d—— fool because she would make eyes at him. Quite to his surprise his mother gave him fifty dollars, saying it was only half a swear and the girl deserved it.

" His father left a large fortune, the use of which is to be his mother's during her lifetime, with the exception of twenty-five thousand dollars which are to be paid to Carl when he is twenty-one. At his mother's death he gets the whole. So, you see, he will some day be a very rich man and a great catch. Pity he wasn't older, or you and Annie younger. He has asked me a great many questions about you; says he always wanted some sisters, and knows he shall like you,—love, I think he said, but he is only a boy and I am not jealous. He leaves day after to-morrow and I shall miss him, for I find myself looking forward to the close of business hours when I am free to join him and hear his funny and original remarks about us and our ways which he says are a hundred years behind Boston."

This letter did not in the least diminish our desire to see Carl Haverleigh, in whose coming the whole household was interested. We were running like clockwork now, with Phyllis as laundress, Norah as cook, Julina as housemaid, and Boston baked beans and brown bread on Sunday. We dressed for dinner and dined in courses at six, while father wore his swallow-tail and Julina waited upon us in her pretty white apron and cap. Mrs. Hathern's carriage and horses had come from Boston. We had a colored coachman from Richmond, who wore a tall hat and brass buttons and went to sleep on the box while

driving us around the neighborhood. Altogether, we were very high-toned and Bostony, and but for a few drawbacks might have enjoyed the new order of things immensely. Our house was handsomely furnished; father's debts were paid, and had he chosen he might have dismissed his patients and lived a life of perfect ease. Mrs. Hathern was very free with her money, and more generous to Fan and me than we expected or deserved. But there was always a feeling of restraint in her presence and a hankering for the flesh-pots of Egypt, when it didn't matter whether things were in order or not, or we on time to a minute; and then there was unfortunate Katy, who not only spent hours in the high chair and in bed for trivial things we had never dreamed of calling faults, but to whose other trials was added that of daily music lessons. Mrs Hathern's piano, a splendid Steinway, had come, and the old one which had been our mother's was moved to make room for it. Then, following Miss Errington's advice, she commenced teaching Katy, who was required to practice every day until her little arms and hands ached with fatigue. She hated the practice, but liked the singing, and every morning for half an hour or more the house was filled with melody as she went up and down the scales, clear and sweet as a bird, while I listened with pride and Fan with fear of what might be the result in the future.

There was to be a cessation of the lessons for a few days on account of Carl's arrival and because of a grand picnic which was to be held in the woods near a little waterfall and a fine bit of scenery. Everybody in town who was anybody was going, and Mrs. Hathern was especially glad that it was fixed for the day after Carl's expected arrival, as it would give her an early opportunity to show her handsome and accomplished son to her

friends and neighbors. I think the New Englander revels in picnics. Mrs. Hathern was certainly in her element preparing for this one and for Carl, who was coming at last.

It was a lovely July day,—cool for the season, but with that deliciousness in the air and deep blue in the sky common to Virginia summers. Carl's room was in readiness for him. Julina had swept and dusted and lingered over it longer than was at all necessary, and there was a light in the girl's eyes and an airiness in her movements which irritated and disgusted us. Mrs. Hathern had hung upon the walls a few pictures we had not seen before, some of them exquisitely colored photographs of Venice and others, copies of Pompeiian dancing girls, who, it seemed to me, might have worn thicker garments and not have been uncomfortable even in the summer. But I was not up in high art and had not spent a year and a half abroad, like Mrs. Hathern, who could contemplate and discuss a Venus de Medicis or Apollo Belvidere as readily as a block of unhewn marble. There was a head of a Madonna, which Mrs. Hathern had found in Florence, in Carl's room, and Norah hung around its neck a string of beads from Lourdes which had been blessed by the Pope; "not for keeps," she said, "but just for a little while to show him I am glad he is coming." Phyllis, too, had brought the only valuable article she possessed,—a handsome bowl of Royal Worcester, which a Federal soldier had given her in exchange for a peck of apples and some walnuts. It was stolen, of course, from some desecrated home, but as Phyllis didn't know where that home was she had no compunctions in taking it, and since the war it had stood on a little table at the head of the bed with her pipes and tobacco and child's first reader which she kept there, not because she could read,—we had tried to

teach her and failed,—but because it looked as if she could. She had heard us talk so much of Carl that she was interested, too, and brought the bowl full of flowers and set it down by his photograph on the bureau.

The morning was long and the evening was longer, but five o'clock came at last and the carriage with Mrs. Hathern and father and Katy went to the station, while Fan and I waited at home upon the piazza, and Julina went once or twice to the gate and looked anxiously down the street. Suddenly there was the sound of rapid footsteps and of some one whistling Dixie at the rear of the hall, and in a moment Carl stood before us, flushed and expectant and eager. The train, which was usually late, had been ahead of time and pulled up at the station before the carriage reached it, for something had happened to the harness and detained it. Everybody knew Carl was coming, and everyone at the station knew it was he as he leaped upon the platform in his long linen duster and straw hat and northern air generally.

"Halloo! Is there anyone here from the Hatherns? I am Carl Haverleigh," was his salutation to the station master, who replied that there was not yet, but undoubtedly would be soon.

"Well, is there a short cut to the house which I can take and surprise them?" he asked next.

There was one and Carl took it and brought up by Phyllis's cabin, where she sat quietly smoking under the dogwood tree after her work was done. Jack had described us all so minutely that Carl knew in a moment who Phyllis was, and his cheery "Halloo, Aunt Phyllis. How d'ye," nearly threw the old woman off her seat. She did drop her clay pipe, and Carl's brown head and her red turban knocked together as both stooped to pick it up

"God bless you, Mas'r Carl! I'se jes tolable, thank ye. How d'ye you 'self?" she said, taking her pipe from him and holding his hand, white as a girl's, in both her black horny ones.

"Where are the folks?" he asked, and she replied, "Ole Mas'r and Missus and Katy has done gone for you, but you'll find de young ladies in the piazza waitin' for you. We's all right glad to see you, Mas'r Carl. Go right up de path dar."

Following her directions he came next to the kitchen, where Norah stopped her preparations for dinner to greet him, while Julina darted out from some corner and seized him by the hand, her black eyes full of the delight she felt. But there was no answering gleam in his, and his "How are you, Julina?" was cold and formal as he hurried on to where we were sitting. Jack had written "He is nearly as tall as I am," but in his long duster he looked taller, and there was such an air of fashion and maturity about him that for a moment we felt abashed as if in the presence of a full-grown young man of a different type from any we had known. This feeling, however, soon passed, for no one could withstand the cordiality of his manner, or the expression of his frank, handsome face.

"Halloo," he cried, "here you are, Fan and Ann, and I am Carl."

He kissed us and whirled us round and told us he was *first rate*, before we could say a word to him. Then, holding each of us by the hand, he looked us over curiously and critically.

"You look just as I thought you did. The rest of the folks have gone for me, I suppose," he said, releasing our hands, and beginning to remove his duster. "Won't

mother scold though because I gave her the slip. Hallo, there they are;" and he darted down the steps to meet the carriage just entering the yard.

There was a slight cloud on Mrs. Hathern's face as she alighted and asked why he did not wait for them.

"Oh, I couldn't. I was in such a hurry to see my sisters, and here's another one," he said, lifting Katy in his arms and squeezing her until she was red in the face.

"You are a beauty, and no mistake!" he said, putting her down and turning to father, towards whom his manner was exceedingly polite and deferential.

It was strange what a change his coming made in our home. He was so bright and thoughtful and magnetic that before the evening was over we felt that we had known him years instead of hours. Jack was a gentleman, and so were all our male acquaintances, while Col. Errington represented the highest phase of polish we had ever seen. But Carl was different from them all, with a difference we felt but could not well define. He seemed to know the right thing to say and when to say it and how to bring out the best there was in one. I had never been as well satisfied with myself as I was after that first evening spent with him, his flatteries and compliments were so delicate and seemed so earnest. Fan thought him not altogether genuine and a little too familiar.

"He is too tall to be putting his arm around us so much," she said when we were discussing him in the privacy of our room. "I call him a flirt, and if there was nothing to keep us in mind, he'd forget us in a week,—but, on the whole, I like him."

Chapter XIV.—Annie's Story Continued.

THE PICNIC.

The picnic grounds were seven or eight miles distant, and we were to start as early as possible so as to avoid the heat of midday. Mrs. Hathern, whose ambition was to excel in everything, had made great preparations for an elaborate lunch, which was to be served by Phyllis and Julina.

Fan said she must have slept in her bonnet, as we found her with it on when we went down to breakfast. Katy was also ready, and so wild with excitement and anticipation that she scarcely heard Mrs. Hathern's oft-repeated warning not to soil her clothes unless she wished to stay at home. She wanted to show Carl her kittens and puppies and chickens, and finally took him down to feed the ducks in a little artificial pond or basin by the side of the lane, where they were assembled in full force, their quacks growing louder and louder when they saw the little girl approaching and knew by instinct that she was coming to feed them. It was great fun throwing them crumbs of bread and watching them as they swam after and fought over them and then craned up their necks for more. For a time everything went well and Katy's white dress was without spot or blemish, although her boots showed marks of the soft soil around the basin. Then suddenly, neither she nor Carl knew how, she slipped and fell in the worst possible place. Her boots and stockings and dress were covered with mud, spatters of which were on her sash and face and hands, so that it was a most forlorn-looking child who came to us, crying bitterly as she held up first one foot and then the other and showed us her muddy hands.

"I am so sorry! Oh, what will mamma say? and can't I go?" was the burden of her cry as we began to wash off the dirt and tried to comfort her.

At that moment Mrs. Hathern, who had heard of Katy's mishap from Carl, appeared in the doorway, her face a thunder cloud and her voice trembling with anger as she said, "You naughty, disobedient child! Why did you go to the duck pond at all? You know what I told you, and I mean it, too. I shall send for Julina at once and put you to bed where you will stay while we are gone."

"Oh, mamma, mamma; please don't make me stay at home. I want to go so much. I didn't think the bank was so soft, and I wanted to show the big duck to Carl," was Katy's despairing cry, as she stretched her little hands imploringly toward her stepmother.

But she might as well have pleaded with a rock. Things generally had gone wrong in the household that morning. Father had been called to an old patient who lived miles away and was dangerously ill. Consequently, he could not go with us unless we waited for him an indefinite length of time. Phyllis had scorched one of the finest table-cloths. Something ailed the range, and Norah's corn cakes were spoiled in the baking, thereby putting her in a state where collision, or even conversation, with her was not desirable. In looking about Carl's room to see if everything was in order, Mrs. Hathern had come across a photograph which Julina had put behind some books where Carl would be sure to find it if he ever took up one to read. The girl's admiration of her handsome son was not unknown to Mrs. Hathern, who heretofore had thought but little of it; but this was going too far, and taking the picture to Julina she tore it into shreds, asking what she meant by such presumption, and threatening her

with instant dismissal if anything of the sort occurred again. It was in vain that Julina protested that she only wanted to put something in Carl's room as all the rest had done,—that she meant nothing wrong. Mrs. Hathern heard her with scorn, and was so scathing and bitter that Julina declared her intention of giving up her place and going home at once. This Mrs. Hathern could not allow. It was well enough for her to threaten dismissal, but for Julina to forestall her by going voluntarily was another thing. She was too well trained and too useful to be given up lightly, and some concession had to be made before matters were adjusted. Following this came the news that Katy had fallen into the duck pond, and this was a straw too much. She could conciliate Julina, because it was for her interest to do so, but towards Katy she was inexorable, notwithstanding that Fan and I pleaded that for this once she might be forgiven.

"Beat her, if you will, but let her go," Fan said. "Think what you are condemning her to,—a long day in bed, while we are enjoying ourselves; and she has anticipated it so much. Father would not allow it if he were here."

"I am very glad then that he is away, as I should be sorry to have any serious disagreement with him on the subject of family discipline," Mrs. Hathern replied, in that tone which always made us so angry.

With a slight inclination of her head she left the room, and the rattle of her stiff skirts as she swept down the stairs reminded us of Norah's shoes when she was in a tantrum. In a few minutes Julina came in, sullen and red-eyed, and began to remove Katy's soiled clothes, while the little girl cried bitterly with long-drawn, gasping sobs, hard for us to bear and know that we were power-

less to help her. What Julina thought we could not guess. Her movements were rather jerky and spiteful as she undressed the child and put her in the little cot, which stood in one corner of our room. Katy's tears, however, must have moved her, for, as she drew the sheet up round her, she said, "It's awful mean, but I wouldn't let her know *I* cared. Norah will come and sit with you and bring you some raspberry tarts."

Then she turned to leave the room, but stopped on the threshold as if a new idea had suddenly occurred to her.

"Katy," she said, going back to the cot, "I believe you'll go yet. I am going to tell Carl."

She found him in the side piazza playing with the kittens, and without softening the matter at all she acquainted him with the facts.

"Where's mother?" Carl asked, and there was a look on his face like his mother as he started in quest of her.

She had come up to his room where he found her and as ours was directly opposite and the doors were open we could not help hearing most of the conversation.

"Mother," he began, in a voice I would never have recognized as Carl's, "what is this about Katy's being kept at home and sent to bed because of an accident?"

"I suppose the young ladies have been complaining to you," Mrs. Hathern said, and Carl replied, "I have not seen them since I came from the duck pond, but I know about Katy, and it's a burning shame to treat a little child like that. I remember the hours,—yes, *weeks*, if all the time were added up,—that Paul and I were kept in bed or on chairs for trivial offenses. It's worse than beating, for that is soon over and done with; Paul said so the time you thrashed him for nothing."

"Why do you bring up Paul so often?" Mrs. Hathern asked, with what seemed a tremor in her voice.

"I don't know, unless it is that he has been in my mind all the morning, and I keep wondering if he were in this part of the country," Carl said, his voice softening as he spoke of Paul, but hardening again as he continued, "Don't make Katy run away as Paul did. She was no more to blame for falling into the mud than I was, nor as much, and by George if she stays home I shall stay, too, and go to bed; or, no, I'll sit up and amuse her."

Here was a family jar in earnest, and we were thinking of closing our door so as not to hear any more, when Mrs. Hathern and Carl must have changed their positions or spoken lower, as we distinguished nothing more, except disjointed sentences, such as *for this once*, and *somebody's sake*—Carl's, or Paul's presumably. Then the former crossed the hall quickly and knocked at our door.

"Hop up, Katy!" he exclaimed, walking up to the cot where Katy had raised herself on her elbow at the sound of his voice. "You are going, if you'll promise never to fall into a frog pond again when you have on your best clothes. Hurry! the carriage will be round in fifteen minutes. Here are your shoes; but where the deuce are your stockings?"

Katy was on the floor by this time and we were all helping her dress, Carl the coolest of the three and showing a deftness and knowledge of straps and buttons and hooks not common in a boy. She was ready in ten minutes, her face a little flushed and stained with tears, but shining with the light of a great and sudden joy, and as the last pin was put in its place she threw her arms around Carl's neck and laying her cheek against his, said to him, "Oh, Carl, I love you so much, and shall love you forever and ever because you are so good."

"Perhaps you'd better say something handsome to

mother for letting you go," Carl said, adding hastily, as he saw Katy's look of perplexity and heard his mother on the stairs: "Tell her she's an angel, or a brick, or an old darling, or something of that sort."

Usually Katy would have known what to say without prompting, but in her excitement she seemed to have lost her wits, and running up to Mrs. Hathern she exclaimed, "I thank you so much, and you are an old darling, and an old angel and an old brick; Carl said so, didn't you, Carl?"

It would be difficult to describe the expression of Mrs. Hathern's face as she looked at her son, who, she knew was responsible for this doubtful compliment, and who laughed so long and loud that Fan and I laughed with him.

"I think you might refrain from teaching Katy slang," she said, with a smile she could not repress.

With harmony thus restored we seated ourselves in the carriage and were driven along the pleasant road and through the shady woods to the picnic grounds, where most of our friends were already assembled and where Mrs. Hathern's good humor soon came back to her with the attention she received. No one's lunch was as elaborate as ours, or as daintily served, for both Phyllis and Julina did their best. Julina's face was clouded and scowling, but she moved with a certain airiness and grace natural to her, and spoke, when she did speak, in the language of a lady rather than of a servant. Hitherto she had only been seen by our neighbors when they called and she let them in, but now she was prominent everywhere and knew she was attracting attention, and her black eyes shone and flashed, and her color came and went until I began to think her positively pretty, and said so to Fan, who was also watching her.

"Dangerous," was her reply, while Carl, who was standing near and heard her, added, "Has Satan in her as big as a barn, and intrigue enough to overthrow an empire. Thinks herself the equal of anybody and means to prove it some day, and, by George, I believe she will. I hope I shan't be one of her victims."

This scarcely seemed possible, but there swept over me suddenly a most unaccountable feeling that in some way that dark, slim girl with the French blood in her veins and the fierce ambition in her heart, might be a blot on the life of the handsome boy, who was the lion of the picnic as his mother was the queen. I had never seen her as gracious as she was that day when she moved among the people as if she had been the hostess instead of one of them. I think it was Carl's presence which made her so different from the cold, precise woman we knew at home. She was very proud of him and of the attention he received. Everybody wished to know him and he wanted to know everybody, and before the day was over had said so many pleasant things and done so many little courteous acts to both old and young that we were congratulated on all sides for our good fortune in possessing so delightful a step-brother. Carl was a success.

Chapter XV.—Annie's Story Continued.

PAUL.

The next day was Sunday, and after our one o'clock dinner Fan and I started for the cemetery on the hillside, accompanied by Carl. We had omitted taking flowers early in the morning, but we had them with us now, and Carl carried them for us and asked many questions about our brother as we went slowly across the fields.

"Shot at Fredericksburg," he said. "That's where a cousin of mine was killed, if he were killed at all. We tracked him to that battle, or thought we did, and have never heard of him since."

Neither Fan nor I made any reply, and he went on: "He was several years older than I, but too young to go to the war. He lived with us and I loved him like a brother, and when I really made up my mind that he was dead I cried myself sick, and now I am sometimes so lonesome for Paul that I want to cry just as I did then. It is hard to believe he is dead, with no proof of it, and every night I pray that he may come back to us, or that we may know for sure what became of him. You pray, don't you? I heard Annie in church this morning, but not a peep from you. I don't believe you said the creed."

He was speaking to Fan, who answered rather shortly, "I prayed so much for the success of the south during the war, and we failed so utterly that I have about lost faith in prayer, and have come to think that what is to be will be, and we can't help ourselves; so what is the use of praying? Didn't the north pray with all their might that their army might be victors, and didn't we do the same

and wern't we just as much in earnest as you were, and which did the Lord hear?"

"Our side, of course, because we were right, and had the most men and money. You shouldn't have been a Reb. if you wanted the Lord to hear you. What could you do against the Lord and such hordes as we had to fight you with?" Carl said, while Fan tossed her head high in the air, but did not continue the conversation.

We were in the enclosure now under the pine trees and were laying the flowers we had brought upon the four graves, our mother's, Katy's mother's, Charlie's and The Boy's. Carl was reading the inscriptions on the tombstones, first mother's, then Katy's mother's, then Charlie's, over which he lingered. "Only nineteen; he would be twenty-three now, that's a little older than Paul, if he were living. Halloo! what does this mean, 'The Boy, who died Good Friday, 1863.' That's a queer inscription. Who was The Boy?"

"We don't know," Fan said, sitting down on an iron chair near the grave and clasping her hands at the back of her head.

Carl looked at her mystified and curious.

"He was one of your people," she continued, and I hated you all, until he came to us and died, with his hand in mine, hurrahing for me. I haven't hated anybody since. Would you like to hear his story?"

"Yes," Carl said, and leaning upon the stone he listened while Fan told the story in all its details as only she could tell it.

At its close Carl was down upon the grassy mound, crushing the flowers we had put there, and sobbing bitterly, "Paul, Paul,—it was Paul! I have found him at last dead, and I had hoped he might come back to me alive. Oh, Paul, I am so sorry for everything."

We were all crying now, and surely over no soldier's grave, north or south, east or west, was sadder moan ever made than over that of The Boy that summer afternoon years and years ago. Whatever of wrong there had been in Carl's treatment of Paul it was atoned for, if tears can atone for a wrong done to the dead. I had never seen a man or boy cry as Carl cried, with his face upon the grass.

"Don't," Fan said at last. "Don't you remember that he bade us tell you he liked you?"

"Yes, I know, and it's that which hurts, and the knowing for sure that he is dead," Carl answered, lifting up his head and wiping away his tears. "I have dreamed so often that he came back that I have almost made myself believe that he would, and I have planned so many things to do when he came. Strange, too, that he has been so often in my mind since I came here. You told me that your woods were often full of Federal troops, and many times at the picnic I was saying to myself, 'Was Paul ever here? Did he see this waterfall, or sleep under that big tree near which they said camp fires were built?' and now I am by his grave, and you cared for him when he died. Tell me more, if there is more to tell."

There was not much, except to show the letter dictated by Charlie and written by The Boy. This, with the lock of hair and the knife and jews-harp Fan had purposely brought with her, meaning to tell the story to Carl just as she had told it. The writing was a scrawl, for the hand which wrote it was throbbing with pain, but Carl identified it as Paul's by the capitals and the formation of some of the letters. The hair and jews-harp and knife he remembered perfectly, and cried again as he held them in his hand.

If I had been beaten in his place, as I ought to have

been he might not have run away, but I was a coward and a sneak," he said referring to a theft of cake which had been charged to Paul and not denied because he wished to shield his cousin.

The memory of this seemed to hurt Carl the most, and he went over with the incident again and again, ending always with the cry, "If I could only take it back." Then he told us briefly what there was to tell of Paul, whose last name was also Haverleigh, as their fathers had been brothers. Both Paul's parents had died when he was young, and he had been, in a way, adopted by his Aunt Martha, who was very fond of him until the birth of Carl, when there came a change.

"I suppose my being her own naturally made a difference," Carl said, "and I know now there was a difference, although mother might not have intended any. I was a spoiled child, and Paul was a lively, wide-awake boy, who, with nothing bad about him, was constantly getting me and himself into scrapes, which mother, with her strict notions, thought awful. Sometimes we were sent to bed or set on hard chairs until they must have ached; I am sure we did. She never inflicted corporal punishment upon Paul but once, and that was about the cake which she thought he stole and lied about. So she thrashed him, and he was nearly as old as I am now. 'Too big to be licked,' he said, and ran away. Where he went at first I do not know, and shall never know now, but after the war broke out we traced him, or thought we did, to the army as a drummer boy. Then mother went to Europe for two years, leaving me at school. When she came home she did try to find him and was almost sure he was at Fredericksburg, and that is all. Does mother know?" he asked, and Fan replied, "I have

told her the story just as I told it to you. She could draw her own conclusions."

For a moment Carl was silent, and then he asked, Did she give no sign that she understood?"

"She cried and has put flowers on his grave every Sunday since," was Fan's answer, and Carl continued: "Yes, she knows, and she is sorry,—more sorry than you think. Mother is a good woman, who means to do right, but, unfortunately, her ideas run in a groove too narrow and deep for her to get them out easily. She is Puritanical all through,—great, great, great and double great something of Miles Standish and the Mayflower. I don't care a fig for either, but I love my mother, and I want you to love her, too. It will be better all round. She is quick to reciprocate, and isn't a bad sort by a long shot,—a little stiff, that's all; and if she didn't own up about Paul, it was a kind of pride which kept her silent. If you told the Aunt Martha part with half the *vim* you told it to me, she could have no doubt of your opinion of her, and it required a good deal of pluck for her to say 'I am that woman.' But she will do it. She'll tell me Paul is here, and she'll tell you that she is Aunt Martha, and propose a big monument for Paul and Charlie."

"No, no," Fan interposed. "We knew your cousin as The Boy, and as such he must remain. We can have no tall monument here."

On our return to the house we found Mrs. Hathern sitting on the piazza. Katy, to whom she had been teaching her duty towards her neighbor, had fallen asleep with her head on her step-mother's lap, while Mrs. Hathern's hand was lying lightly on the child's yellow curls. It was a very pretty picture of domestic happiness, and I began to think that, as Carl had said, his mother was not a bad sort

after all. There was an anxious, worried look on her face as we came up the steps, on which we all sat down, as the day was very hot.

"Carl," she began, with a lump in her throat, "you have been to Paul's grave and have heard how kindly he was cared for by Fanny and Annie?"

Carl nodded, and she went on: "It was a shock to me to know that he was here. You told your sisters, I hope, how we tried to trace him?"

"Yes, I told them everything," Carl answered, and she continued: "I am glad you did. I couldn't tell them when I first knew about it. I simply couldn't, and I waited for you to come. I would give a great deal to have Paul back alive, but as that cannot be, I am glad to know where he is lying; and if you think best we will have him removed to our family lot in Mt. Auburn."

"Never, no, never," and Fan sprang to her feet. "He is *our Boy*. He died with us; we buried him; we loved him. He was ours, and we must keep him here with Charlie."

"You shall, if you feel like that," Mrs. Hathern said, "and both Carl and I are more thankful than we can express for the kindness he received from you all. I told your father while you were at his grave, and it affected him greatly. It is strange that our families should be thus brought together, and I hope that the memory of Paul may be a bond of sympathy and kindly feeling between us."

She held out her hand first to Fanny and then to me, and as we took it we felt that there had already commenced a better understanding between us than had existed before.

"I told you she would face the music, and for her she

did it handsomely," Carl said, when we were alone with him. "She knows she was to blame, and if I were you, I wouldn't *nag* her about him any more."

This he said to Fan, who only answered with a flash of her black eyes. But we understood what he meant, and Paul was never mentioned by us in her presence unless she spoke of him first, which she seldom did. A monument, which should have both his and Charlie's name upon it, was suggested by her and vetoed by us all. He came to us as the *Boy;* he died the *Boy*, and the *Boy* he must always be to us, a sacred memory, which united the Hatherns and Haverleighs more closely and proved a bond of sympathy and friendship between us and our stepmother.

Looking back through a vista of years and turning some blotted pages of Carl's life, when temptation got the better of him, I cannot recall a pleasanter summer than that which he spent with us at the Elms. He was so bright and suggestive and thoughtful for every one, and so anxious to please and make the best of everything that he carried sunshine wherever he went. It was a rare gift he possessed of winning all hearts to him, and Fan and I learned more than one lesson of forbearance and toleration from him, although we laughed at him as a prig and should have called him a *dude*, had the word then been invented.

With the townspeople he was very popular, especially with the young girls, who seemed suddenly to have grown very fond of Fan and myself, and who came to our house at all hours of the day. We had not supposed that Mrs. Hathern cared much for young people, but she was very gracious to Carl's friends. She gave us teas on the lawn and lunches on the piazza, and played for us to dance in the drawing-room and planned excursions for us so

that the summer was one long holiday, with Carl as the central figure.

It was September when he left us for Andover, and there were nearly as many people at the station to see him off as there used to be when our soldiers left us for the war. Naturally, after so much pleasant intercourse we expected a great deal of pleasure from his letters. But here we were disappointed. He wrote to us often at first, telling us of his life at Andover, but evincing little interest in the people of Lovering, who remembered him so kindly and spoke of him so often. Then his letters grew shorter and less frequent, and when Fan berated him for it, he gave as an excuse that he was very busy with his studies, trying to fit himself to enter Harvard the next year.

"But whether I write often, or not at all, you may be sure that you are always in my mind and that I love you dearly," he wrote, and signed himself, "Your loving brother, Carl."

"Nonsense," Fan said. "It is a clear case of 'out of sight, out of mind.' He was pleased with us when here, but now we are like names written on the sands of the sea which the first wave washes away. Carl is nice, but fickle."

Chapter XVI.—Annie's Story Continued.

LITTLE PAUL.

The autumn following Carl's visit to us passed with little to break the monotony of our lives. Miss Errington wrote occasionally, full of solicitude with regard to Katy's music, which was progressing so rapidly as to astonish both Fan and myself, and even Mrs. Hathern, who was a thorough and exacting teacher. Jack wrote often and Fan answered when she felt like it. She had not yet made up her mind to be the wife of a poor man, and until she did she could not encourage Jack in his foolishness. Col. Errington did not write again and his proposal of marriage remained unanswered.

"I am very well as I am, and quite chummy with Mrs. Hathern, who has really contributed a great deal to our bodily comfort. I do not want a change as much as I did, and as long as I have two strings to my bow and can choose either at any moment, I am content," she said, and took the good the gods had provided and laughed over Jack's love-letters, which were becoming importunate and impatient as he longed for something to work for and hope for and keep his courage up.

As for the household, it moved on with a regularity which no one but Mrs. Hathern could have achieved.

One or two jars there were when Phyllis's turban was frightfully awry and Norah's shoes could be heard all over the house; but, for the most part, they were on amicable terms and both united in their antipathy to Julina, who was growing more airy and important every day, and more disinclined to believe in that portion of the catechism which bade her to be content with the condition of life to which

it had pleased God to call her. "Who would ever get on in the world if they followed that injunction?" she said, and what was our democratic government good for if it didn't give everyone an equal chance to rise if he had the brain and will to do so? And she meant to rise. She had once had her fortune told by a clairvoyant in Boston who predicted that she would some day be a great lady, with money and influence at her command. This she communicated confidentially to Fan and me as the secret of her ambition and belief in the future. And at last there came a rift in the clouds,—an opening through which she caught a glimpse of the future she felt so sure of. Her father died suddenly, and the letter which brought the news enclosed one from an aunt in France inviting Julina, who was her namesake, to visit her for as long a time as she chose to stay. Here was her opportunity, and she took it and left us at once, so full of her aunt's château, which, she said, was not far from Fontainebleau, that she came near forgetting to mourn for her father, who had never been much to her.

Two or three weeks later Carl wrote that he had seen her in Boston and that she was to sail for Havre in a few days. Afterwards he sent us a list of passengers on a French steamer, and among them was the name *Mademoiselle Julina Smythe*, who for years passed completely out of our knowledge and then reappeared in a most unexpected manner.

Christmas came and went, and the winter glided into spring and spring into the first days of June, when the world,—or, at least, that part which Lovering represented,—was full of the beauty and brightness and fragrance of early summer. Never before had our grounds and garden been as lovely and attractive as they were now. Money

and taste can do almost everything, and Mrs. Hathern had both, and had expended them freely upon The Elms, which she meant to make the show place in the county. It was exceedingly pretty now, with its grassy lawn, its urns and baskets of various designs and sizes, its rustic chairs and stands for books or work or tea, and its garden full of flowers. After all, it was not a bad thing that father did when he married Mrs. Haverleigh, who had brought us so much luxury and to whom we were getting quite reconciled. She had been so much softer and more companionable since Carl's visit and our talk with her of The Boy that I began to like her; while Fan, who was slow to change her mind, admitted that things might be worse, and if——. There is nearly always an " if " in every cup of happiness, and ours was so unlooked-for and seemed so undesirable that for a time we refused to accept it as dutiful daughters ought to have done. But there was no alternative; we could not run away, for there was no place to run to, and after a while we made up our minds to submit as gracefully as we could to the inevitable.

In due time a trained nurse arrived from Boston, and a few days later father went in and out of his bed-chamber with an anxious look and frequent demands on Phyllis, who, in her excitement, forgot to put on her turban and seemed like one distraught as she hovered between the kitchen and the sick room; while Fan and I, with Katy between us, sat under an elm in the farthest part of the grounds and waited, wondering what Carl would say when he heard the news. Norah brought us our lunch, which we ate on the little willow table where we had often had our tea. Her face was cloudy and her shoes creaked even on the grass, showing us her opinion of the matter. I remember so well every incident of that long day,—the

glints of sunshine through the trees, the scent of the flowers, the blue of the sky, the twitter and almost human talk of two robins teaching their young ones to fly, and, at last, as the evening wore on and we heard the town clock strike two, Phyllis coming to us across the lawn, her face all aglow with the news she had to tell.

"You've done got a little brudder," she said, "an' oh! my Lord, he's dat small. I reckon he could wear one of Miss Katy's doll dresses. Will you come to the house and I'll fotch him to you?"

"No, thank you," Fan said, with a disdainful toss of her head. "I am in no hurry to see my little brother."

What Fan did, I generally did, and against my better judgment I, too, sat still, but asked, "How is Mrs. Hathern?"

"Mighty bad, I s'pecs, by the way old Mas'r looks and that Boston nuss. She hasn't seen her baby at all an' she's as white as a piece of paper, and keeps moanin' like."

"Do you think she will die?" Fan asked, with a ring in her voice which reminded me of the days when we were watching by The Boy.

"Oh, de good Lord forbid!" was Phyllis's ejaculation. "What could we do with a new bawn baby and the mother dead?"

What, indeed, and why was he sent to us, we asked ourselves, as we sat watching Phyllis going swiftly across the lawn with Katy in advance. Katy was happy, and her first exclamation as she sped away from us was, "Oh, I am so glad, and can I see him now?"

I don't know how long Fan and I sat discussing the situation, she threatening to answer Col. Errington's letter and I proposing to make the best of what could not be

helped. Perhaps it was an hour, perhaps it was more, when Phyllis appeared again, holding her apron to her eyes with one hand and beckoning us wildly with the other.

"Mrs. Hathern is done took wus, and has as't for you," she said.

In an instant we were on our feet, flying towards the house, Fan, as usual, outstripping me and thinking with remorse of the bitter things she had said of the innocent baby, whose plaintive wail we heard as we entered the hall. In every woman's heart, be she ever so bad and hard, there is a motherly instinct which, under certain conditions, will assert itself. We were neither very hard nor very bad. We were only rebelling as grown-up daughters sometimes do against the introduction in their midst of a baby, and especially when that baby is the offspring of a stepmother. We had not wanted the stepmother, and we didn't want the baby; but when its faint cry came to us Fan clutched my arm and whispered, "Oh, Ann, hear the poor little thing. I hope its mother won't die."

It seemed to me very probable that she would, when I entered her room and saw her lying there so motionless upon her pillows, with every particle of her bright color gone from her face, which looked pinched and haggard and old for a woman of only forty. She had never seemed more than thirty-five. Her eyes were closed and we might have thought her asleep, but for a fluttering of the lids and a movement of her hand as the rustle of our dresses broke the stillness of the room. Katy, who had been fondling the baby, which a negro woman was caring for in an adjoining room, had joined us, and when she saw the white face so changed from what it had been the previous night, when it looked the picture of health, she

ran up to father, who was sitting at the side of the bed, and cried out, "Oh, papa, what is it? What makes her look so? Is she very sick?"

A warning sh—— came from the nurse, who was moistening the patient's lips with some stimulant; but at the sound of Katy's voice, Mrs. Hathern moved slightly and opened the great black eyes of which we had stood so much in awe. There was nothing to fear from them now, and it seemed to me there was in them a look of wonderful tenderness and love as they rested upon the little girl who was bending close to her.

"Katy," she said, putting her hand upon the curly head which nestled down beside her as Katy asked again, "Are you very sick, mamma, and do you know about the baby? We've got one in the other room. Old Chloe brought him this morning, with a heap of clothes. I'm so glad."

A faint smile showed around Mrs. Hathern's mouth and her hand pressed more heavily upon the golden curls.

"Yes, Katy," she said, very low as if talking were an effort, "I know about the baby, and I want you to love him and care for him if I should go away. Will you, Katy?"

Just so, ten years before, Katy's mother, in that very room, had spoken to Fan and me, and the scene came back to us so vividly,—the young mother dying and commending to us the little life which had just begun and had since grown to be a part of our whole being. Now it was another mother, and Katy to whom the charge was given, and for a moment I think we both felt chagrined that we should be forgotten; but only for a moment. Turning her eyes towards us, they shone with a strange light of satisfaction as she said, in detached sentences, "Fanny

and Annie, I am glad you have come. I want to tell you it was my way that was in fault, not my heart, and I am sorry for all that has gone wrong. You like Carl; try and like my little baby. I know he is not welcome, and when I am gone he may be still less so; he is not to blame. Perhaps God will take him with me; if not, be kind to him, for his father's sake, and—" She stopped a few moments as if tired out and then resumed, as her eyes wandered around the room, "Where is Fanny?"

"Here I am," Fan answered, sitting down upon the edge of the bed and taking in hers the cold, clammy hand which was moving restlessly. "Here I am; do you want to tell me something?"

"Yes. About the little baby. Would you object to calling him *Paul Haverleigh*, after The Boy?"

"No, no; I'd like it," Fan answered with a choking voice, for, with that subtle intuition which we cannot define, she felt the dark shadow stealing into the room and settling upon the features of our stepmother.

"In my wish to do right, I went wrong with Paul. I know it now, and am sorry. I shall tell him when I see him, and tell him of you. Keep Carl straight. He has fine instincts, but is easily influenced and may be led astray if the temptation comes in pleasant guise. If he falls it will be a woman who lures him on. Keep him as much as possible under your influence and Annie's. I wish I might see him again, but—" Here her mind began to wander. "It's getting late. Katy ought to go to bed. Good-night, Katy. I have loved you more than you know."

She lifted herself up and kissed the bright face bent down to hers, and then lay back upon her pillow as if utterly exhausted.

"Must I go to bed before the sun is down?" Katy whispered to her father, who shook his head and held her closely to him.

It was hours yet before the sun would set, and as they dragged slowly on we watched the dying woman who talked of many things strange to us. Of her first husband and her early home in Maine, and the school-house under the hill with the girls and boys she had known and played with there. They were old men and women now, she said, and their faces were tired and worn as if life had been hard to bear, and she had so much wanted to help them in some way. Then she spoke of Paul and we learned more of him from her ravings than we had known before, and saw more of the motives and principles which had actuated her conduct. Neither were bad, but strict almost to severity. Then she talked of Carl and Katy and father and ourselves, who, she said, did not understand her, but she never mentioned the little baby so soon to be left motherless. He had come into her life so recently and his coming had brought her so low that she seemed to have forgotten him entirely. She grew very quiet at last and fell asleep, while Fan, who always rose to the occasion, took her post at the bedside, bidding the nurse take the rest she needed so much. It was not a long vigil we kept, for as the sun was setting Mrs. Hathern awoke and began to move her hands over the bedclothes as if in quest of something.

"Where is it? Do you know?" she said to Fan, who, divining her meaning, went to the next room where the baby was sleeping in Phyllis's lap.

Fan had not seen it yet and she scarcely glanced at it now, but she lifted it very carefully in her arms and brought it to its mother.

"Look," she said. "It's the baby."

Very curiously the sick woman looked first at Fan and then at the child, but the mist of death had gathered too thickly on her brain for her to realize the truth. The baby was a puzzle she could not solve.

"Whose is it? Yours?" she asked, putting her hand upon its head.

"No," Fan answered very gently. "It is your baby,—little Paul. Don't you remember?"

There was a struggle between reason and delirium, but the soul was drifting away too far for any real consciousness or memory. Only the name of Paul arrested and held it for a moment.

"Little Paul," she whispered, with a smile. "Yes, he was a pretty boy when I took him; bigger than this one. Whose did you say it is? And who are you?"

Her hand still lay on the baby's head, but her eyes were closed. She was going fast and Fan knew it, and in an ecstasy of grief and terror held the baby face close to the white lips and said, "*Mother*, *mother*, it is your baby. Kiss him once, that I may tell him. It is little Paul."

She had never before called Mrs. Hathern *mother*, and now it came from her involuntarily, born of her pity for the dying woman and helpless child. But it produced a wonderful effect. Quickly the eyes unclosed and were illumined with a strange light as they beamed upon Fan.

"You called me *mother*," she said, "and it brings things back to me and makes me glad. Thank you, Fanny. Hold the baby nearer while I kiss him for the first and last time. Little Paul, my little Paul."

She put her arms around the boy, kissed him twice and never spoke again, although she lived until the early

dawn of the next day, and then died as peacefully as if going to sleep.

It was I who went with father on the long, sad journey to Mt. Auburn, where the costly monuments and signs of grandeur everywhere were in striking contrast to the simple cemetery on the hillside where she had expressed a wish not to be buried; but when the ceremony of interment was over and we turned away, leaving our dead there alone, I felt that when my time should come I should far rather lie down under the whispering pines, within sight of the lights of home, than be left in that "beautiful city of the dead." The family monument was tall and grand, and beside the husband's name was that of "Paul Haverleigh, who died in Lovering, Va., March, 1863, aged 18 years." I did not know before that it was there, and when I saw it I was conscious of an added feeling of respect and regret for the woman whose real worth I had, perhaps, not fully appreciated.

Carl had met us in Albany, so stunned by the shock of his mother's death that he scarcely spoke at all, and never asked a question until after the burial and I was alone with him at the Revere, where we stopped, as his mother's house was rented. I do not think he had shed a tear, but his face was very pale and there were dark circles under his eyes as he sat down by me and said: "Now, Annie, tell me about it. Why did mother die? What was the matter?"

I looked at him in some surprise and asked, "Do you really know nothing?"

"Nothing," he answered, "except the telegram saying she was dead. I supposed her perfectly well. She wrote to me last week as usual. It must have been terribly sudden."

"It was sudden," I said. "It was almost like well to-day and dead to-morrow."

"But what was it?" he asked, a little impatiently, and I replied, "Carl, don't you know there is a little baby at The Elms, your brother and mine, who cost your mother her life?"

"A baby? Your brother and mine? It is not true," he exclaimed, springing to his feet and staring at me as if in some way I were to blame.

"It is true," I said. "There is a baby at The Elms, born a few hours before your mother died, and Fan is caring for it. That's why she didn't come. She held it for your mother to kiss before she died. 'My little Paul,' she called it, and those were the last words she ever spoke. 'My little Paul.'"

Whether it was the memory of the Paul whose grave was under the Virginia pines, or the thought of his dying mother kissing her little boy, or both, I cannot tell; but something unlocked the flood-gates of Carl's tears, and laying his head on my shoulder he sobbed bitterly, while I tried to comfort him.

"Don't, Annie," he said, "don't speak to me; don't try to stop me. I must cry. I am so glad to cry. I couldn't at first for the something that choked me so, when I heard mother was dead."

He grew calm at last, and began to talk naturally, inquiring after Fan and Katy, and Norah and Phyllis, but saying nothing of the baby. Nor during the few days we stayed in Boston did he ever speak of it of his own accord. He evinced, however, a good deal of interest in, as well as knowledge of, business matters, which were necessarily discussed by my father. By the conditions of the Haverleigh will Carl was now sole heir of his father's

fortune, which was larger than we had supposed. Knowing that he had inherited her love for luxury and expenditure, his mother had purposely kept from him the exact amount of his father's estate, which, now that he knew it, filled his mind more than the very small amount which little Paul was to have by will from his mother. From the income of her husband's money Mrs. Hathern had only saved a few thousands, which were hers to do with as she pleased, and these, by a will made a few weeks before her death, she had left equally to my father and their child, should he live; so, while Carl counted his money by hundreds of thousands, little Paul had scarcely three. My father had the same and all the furniture which had been taken to The Elms. I do not think the discrepancy between his fortune and that of his brother occurred to Carl.

The baby was something wholly unexpected and whose existence he could not realize. The money was *his* father's, not little Paul's, and he accepted it as a matter of course, assuming, as it seemed to me, a slight air of importance as the heir to so much wealth. He was very kind to us, and very generous during our stay in Boston, paying all our bills and insisting upon taking us everywhere, or, rather, taking me. Father had no heart to go, but I was young, and the sights of Boston were new and wonderful, and I went wherever Carl took me. Sometimes he spoke of his mother and always with great affection, but he never mentioned Paul until the day we left when he brought me a silver rattle, which he said was for "the little shaver," who, he presumed, would be a lot of bother to us.

"Indeed, he will not," I answered, rather hotly, for I was irritated by his indifference. "He is a dear little thing, and so you will think when you come to us in July."

"I don't believe I shall come," he said, hesitatingly, and without looking directly at me.

"Not come!" I repeated. "Oh, Carl, we have anticipated your visit so much that you must not disappoint us. Your mother wanted us to see a great deal of you, and Fan and I will do all we can to make you happy. You said you liked Virginia and us."

"So I do," he answered. "I like you immensely, but you see mother's not being there will make it so sad, and then a lot of the boys are going to camp out in the Adirondacks and want me to go with them. It will not take all summer, though, and, perhaps, I'll run down for a week or two at the last; so don't look so gloomy, sister mine. I do love you and Fan and Katy dearly, and I did have a grand time at The Elms; but you see mother is gone, and I like change and new faces,—a new one for every day of the year, if I could have it. Bad in me, I know; but I was born that way, and can't help it."

He didn't seem quite like the Carl of the previous year. He was older,—more mature, more like a young man of twenty one than a boy of seventeen. But he kissed me very affectionately at parting, and sent his love, with a shell comb, to Fanny, a doll for Katy, a red silk handkerchief for a turban for Phyllis, and a new gown to Norah.

These, with the silver rattle, I brought to our home, which seemed very desolate without the ruling spirit which had kept us at so high pressure that, although we had not at first liked it, we missed it, now it was gone, more than we had thought possible.

"I really don't know when to go to bed, or get up, or what I ought to do when I am up," Fan said, with a half sob as we talked matters over the night after my return.

She had dismissed the nurse as too expensive an article

to keep. She knew that the money which had been spent so lavishly for us all must cease with Mrs. Hathern's death, and when I told her what had been left to father, she said, "For his sake I wish it might have been more; he is growing old and his practice is nothing. For ourselves I don't care. We learned a good many useful lessons from Mrs. Hathern, and I hope we shall not fall back into our old slipshod ways. We have certainly gained something by her coming here,—orderly habits, and *our baby*."

There was a world of tenderness in her voice as she said "our baby" and bent over the cradle where he was sleeping. He was so small that I was half afraid to touch him lest he should break in my hands like some brittle toy; but Fan took to him naturally, constituting herself his nurse and exulting over every sign of growing intellect or physical strength as if she had been his mother. What Carl would think of him was a question we often asked ourselves as we counted the weeks he was to spend in the Adirondacks, and then began to look for his coming. But we looked in vain. Following the Adirondacks was an excursion to the White Mountains, which lasted so long that at its close only a few days remained in which to visit us before returning to Andover, and he hardly thought it would pay to take the long journey for so short a time. He wrote to us often long chatty letters full of affection and promises to spend the whole of the next long vacation with us. But the long vacation came and went and was succeeded by another and another, and still Carl did not come.

PART II.—FANNY AND JACK.

CHAPTER I.—ANNIE'S STORY CONTINUED.

AFTER FIVE YEARS.

IT is a question whether one can truly love more than once. I do not think a woman can. But men are different and seem capable of many loves. If anyone doubts this let him recall the number of widows and widowers among his acquaintance, and see if there are not fifty per cent. more of the former than of the latter. Three women had called my father husband and I believe he had loved them all devotedly, but whether it was the suddenness of the blow, or because he missed the force and energy which had kept him going, the death of the last Mrs. Hathern crushed him completely, and made him an old man at once.

"I don't know what ails me, girls, but since your mother died I don't seem to have any life or ambition left. I am like a clock which has run down and can't be wound up again," he would say to us when he came in from a walk into town or country where he still had a few patients of the old school.

He had never spoken to us of Mrs. Hathern as our mother while she lived; but now that she was dead he always mentioned her in that way, and we humored him, and sometimes called her so ourselves, and petted and made much of him, and felt that, like him, we were ships without rudders and didn't know how to run ourselves. Especially was this the case with Phyllis, who needed whip and spur to keep her in the harness.

"I 'clars to goodness I don't know nothin' now the missus isn't here to boss," she said, as she sat on the

bench outside the cabin door, her feet stretched out in front of her, her hands idly folded on her lap, her ironing neglected and her irons cooling on the hearth.

Only Norah kept her balance and went steadily on her way, her shoes creaking a good deal and her sharp tongue often lashing Phyllis when she got too far out of line. For three or four months Norah staid with us and then, as it was impossible for us to pay her the wages she had been receiving, she left us for Boston. But not until she had everything in what she called "apple-pie order," an expression which, I think, must belong exclusively to the east, as it was a favorite with Mrs. Hathern, and I have never heard it elsewhere. Owing to her delicate health Mrs. Hathern had deferred the spring cleaning, which she intended to take in hand as soon as her illness was over. But death snatched her away and it was left for Norah to carry out her plans, which she did with a vengeance. Everything was turned topsy-turvey, as it had been the year before when Mrs. Hathern was the presiding genius of brush and broom and soap suds. There was, however, this difference, there were no carpenters and masons and plumbers blocking the way, or hired negroes either. Knowing the low state of our finances Norah did everything herself with the little help she could extort from Phyllis. That functionary had taken to violent fits of short breath when there was more than usual to do. "Physicy," she called it, and she had it badly now and wheezingly protested against so much useless cleaning. A little dirt was healthy, she said, and privately we sympathized with her, and were glad when Norah told us that we needn't go through with quite so much in the fall. Boston folks didn't as a rule.

"Wash the windows; wipe the fly-specs from the

paint; air everything, and give the rest a lick and a promise and let it go till spring, when mabby I'll visit you and see to the annual clean myself," she said. Then, as a happy inspiration seized her, she added: "There are a few things you must see to every day, and as I know you won't remember 'em all I'll write 'em down."

The result of this was a long document so full of what we were to do and not to do that I felt dizzy and bewildered as I read it, and then passed it on to Fan, who, with no fancy for housekeeping, threw it aside. This morning while looking over a trunk of old papers I came across that sheet of foolscap, written nearly thirty years ago, yellow with age, blurred and blotted and wonderful for composition and orthography. There were tear stains upon it, too, as I re-read it and thought of all which had happened since the autumnal day when Norah first brought it to me and asked me to nail it up in the pantry where it could be seen every day. I will give a few extracts: "Fust and fornenst, don't let Phyllis make a pig-sty of my kitchen. I've kept it so clane that I can *need bred* in it anywhere; don't let her get pot black all over the table, and greese on the floor; don't let her leave the kittles on the range till they bile dry, specially the Te kittle. Ittle leek, and hev to be mended, an't costs money; an' there an't no Miss Hathern to pay the bills now; don't let her put the wash biler away till she's wiped it and the cover dry, or the close will be all iron rust; don't let her open all the draffs and pile the cole on till the griddles is red hot, an' the fire all going up the chimly. Ittle warp 'em an' spile the range. Make her hang up the broom, or stand it on end. Ittle last longer. An' ef I'se you, I wouldn't use gilt ege chany every day as Miss Hathern did. You'se them tothers. An' don't let

Phyllis jab her big black thum into that mended place on the vegetable dish. Ittle break sure. An' don't let her slat her things round everywhere in my nice kitchen. Tell her Miss Hathern will appear to her some nite if she does. That'll fetch her. She's afraid of spooks."

All this, and much more, Norah wrote, and I promised to follow her instructions as well as I could. Then one morning in October the 'bus which had brought her to us came to take her away. Lifting the baby from his cradle she cried over and kissed him and, assuring us that he was not long for this world, he looked so *pimpin*, she put him back and said good-bye and went away, while we watched her as far as we could see her with swelling hearts and tearful eyes, wondering how we should get on without her.

The next morning I read her instructions to Phyllis. She had moved her belongings from her cabin into the kitchen, which already began to show signs of a new administration. Seated upon an inverted wash tub she listened to my reading with sundry snorts and shakes of her head until her turban fell off and lay upon the floor.

"For de Lord's sake, chile, is you that soft to think I can 'member all dem things. No, sor; but nebber you mind, honey, I'se no fool, if I is a brack nigger. I'se kep' my eyes open more'n you thinks an' learned a heap of dem Boston ways. You'll see; don't you worry, nor come speerin' 'round de kitchen. Jess stay in de parlor whar ladies belong, an' I'll run de ranch! I'se cap'n now."

She adjusted her turban, picked up the mop and the broom, put them together behind the door, where Norah's sunbonnet used to hang, and began to bustle about with the activity of a young girl. Norah's instructions I

pinned up, as I said I should, but they were all lost on Phyllis except the possibility of Mrs. Hathern's return if things were too much mixed; that troubled her. For several nights when we were up with our baby we saw a light in the cabin where she slept. When questioned about it she owned to keeping a candle burning "So as to see de missus if she comes. I'se not gwine to be took unawares, nor be so unmanneredly as to let her stumble roun' in de dark."

"But, Phyllis," Fan said, "if it is dark she can't see the litter."

"Dat's so, honey, I hain't thought of dat," was Phyllis's rejoinder, and that night there was no candle burning in Phyllis's room, but the door we knew was barricaded and the window nailed down to keep out Norah quite as much as Mrs. Hathern.

The superstitious old woman had been detected so often by the former in her little attempts to deceive that she had come to look upon her with a kind of awe as one gifted with second sight, who might pounce upon her in bodily shape quite as readily as Mrs. Hathern in ghostly form. With Norah's departure the last link was severed which bound us to the new life, and I am ashamed to confess how quickly and unconsciously we took up the old one. It was so easy to do it, with Phyllis anticipating all our wants and encouraging us in our indolence. We breakfasted when we felt like it; had dinner and supper at all hours, while the kitchen gradually came to look like anything but a place where Norah could knead her bread on the floor. Phyllis's handiwork was everywhere. There was pot black on the sink, and grease on the floor. Her big black thumb had *jabbed* out the broken piece in the vegetable dish, and the hot tomatoes had been spilled,

some on the carpet and some down Fan's back. The wash boiler had been discarded for an iron kettle, and was filled with a variety of articles, conspicuous among which were father's boot-jack and blacking brush. The griddles on the range were red most of the time and began to warp and crack; the kettles burned dry; the tea-kettle leaked and was mended so often that father at last mildly protested, saying it was cheaper to get a new one, which he could ill afford as his bill at the hardware store was already a large one. Then I tried to take the helm. There were a good many battles with Phyllis, who, however, succumbed so far as to have one day in each week for *clarin up*, "and the Lord himself couldn't ax more'n that ef she was workin' for him," she said.

In the midst of all our difficulties our baby was never for a moment forgotten or neglected. Norah had called him *pimpin*, by which she meant delicate, and so he was. But he was a beautiful child, with wavy hair, and eyes a cross between blue and gray, a complexion like wax and the prettiest ways, which made us all his slaves. It was Fan who devoted herself to him, while I wrestled with the house. When he began to talk, her name, or an attempt at it, was the first word he tried to speak. He had often heard us spoken of as "*Fan-and-Ann*," and with a quickness and persistence for which he was remarkable, he caught it and applied it to her alone. "*Fan-er-nan*" he always called her, while, for some reason known only to himself, I was *Annie-mother*, although I didn't take half the care of him that she did. As soon as we thought he could understand we told him of his mother, and when he asked us where she was Fan answered "In Paradise," and tried to make him repeat the word after her.

"Oh, my lan!" came derisively from Phyllis, who was

within hearing. She didn't "b'lieve in 'dat ar *pair-o'-dice*,'" she said, and when next she was alone with the little fellow she took him in her lap, gave him a lump of sugar and said to him, "Don't you let 'em fool you about dat ar *pair-o'-dice*. Dar ain't no sich place. Your mar's sperrit is in heaven, and her body in Boston."

After that he always insisted that his mother had gone to heaven in Boston. He knew that Carl was in Boston, and saw no reason why his mother should not be there too. We told him a great deal of Carl, who became to him a kind of imaginary hero, and whom he always remembered in his prayers, asking that God would bless "brother Tarl, make him a good boy, and keep him *straight*." Mrs. Hathern's dying injunction had been "Keep Carl straight," and as we never saw him Fan hoped a baby's prayers might accomplish what we had no means of doing, and taught the words to Paul. Carl was in Harvard, doing fairly well for a young man of his means and tastes. He had plenty of money, and was fond of luxury and "larks," and sometimes wrote us letters which made our hair stand on end. It was usually Fan who took up the cudgels and berated him for what she called his "goings on." He always answered good-humoredly, telling her she was too prudish and knew nothing of the world, living as she did in that out-of-the-way place.

"Not that Lovering isn't lovely," he added, "and I'd like nothing better than to live with you in the charming old home I remember with so much pleasure."

He always addressed us as "My dear sisters," and signed himself, "Your loving brother."

"Words,—nothing but words, which are so cheap," Fan would say derisively. "If we are so dear, and the old house so charming, why does he never come near us.

I tell you there is something wrong about Carl. He is fickle and fast."

I feared so, too; but there was a very warm spot in my heart for Carl, whom I always defended, while Katy would never hear a word of censure against him. He was her hero as well as Paul's, and she would rather he would bo fast than stupid, she said. Just before he was graduated he sent a most cordial invitation for us all to come east and see him take his degree.

"I have been in a good many scrapes," he wrote, "but have managed to slip out. I always have my lessons and shall come off with some honor, and I want you here to share it. So, pack up your best clothes. I shall want my sisters to look well, and some of the Boston girls are stunners. Bring Phyllis and the baby, and I will quarter you all in my house in Boston, with Norah to superintend. Did I tell you that I took the house when the last tenant's lease expired, and had it refurnished from top to toe, and put Norah there to keep it for me? Quite a comfortable bachelor's home you will find it."

"Oh, how I'd like to go," I exclaimed, remembering the pleasant house looking out upon the Common, and feeling a great desire to see Boston and Carl again.

But the thing was impossible. It was five years now since Mrs. Hathern died, and every year we had been growing poorer. Father's practice was gone, or nearly so, and the few thousands left him by his wife had been drawn upon so many times that there was not much now to draw from. The trip to Boston was not to be thought of, and Fan answered the letter, declining the invitation.

He was sorry, he wrote in reply, adding that as we were not coming he should give a swell dinner in his house to his classmates and have a "high old time."

As it chanced Jack was in Boston on business and meeting Carl accidentally was persuaded to be present at the dinner, which surpassed anything he had ever seen.

"The flowers alone and decorations must have cost hundreds of dollars," he wrote to Fan; "and there were dishes whose name I never heard before and which I never care to taste again. Everyone was in evening dress but myself, who felt rather countryfied and out of place in my business clothes. But Carl was the same old kind-hearted boy, and made me feel perfectly at home and treated me as his honored guest. We sat down at nine and did not get up till two in the morning. Even then some of them did not get up at all for they were under the table, and lying round loose anywhere, and I shouldn't like to tell Fan, how many empty wine bottles were carried out by the waiters; but this I will say, I turned my glass down every time, although I know I was thought a milksop for doing it."

This was at the time the great temperance crusade was beginning to sweep over the land, and Fan was head and front of the movement in Lovering. She had led a band of women into some of the lowest saloons and been threatened with eggs and brickbats, but had held her own bravely and won respect and attention where, at first, she met with coarse language and derisive jeers. Jack's letter roused her to a pitch of white heat and she wrote to Carl, asking what his mother would say could she have looked upon the drunken revel, and if he didn't think himself about as mean and low as he well could be for acting so entirely at variance with his mother's wishes.

Carl's reply was good-humored and apologetic. He was a cad, he said, to break his promise to his mother, but he positively had never been tipsy.

"I suppose, though, I can drink more than most fellows and not be affected by it," he wrote. "But that is no excuse, and to prove that I am in earnest I have taken the pledge and shall keep it, too, as bravely as Jack Fullerton did that night. I never respected a man more in my life than I did him, even while chaffing him a little and calling him an old maid. He is the right kind of stuff, and I don't see why you don't marry him."

"Carl's advice is good," I said. "Why don't you marry Jack?"

There was an upward turn of Fan's chin as she answered me—

"Poor, too poor. I can struggle with poverty at home but when I have one of my own I must have some luxuries. So I'll wait awhile. I am only twenty-five, if old Granny Baker did say at the sewing society that 'it was time them Hathern girls were married, as they are gettin' to be old maids.' Old maids, indeed! Do I look like one?"

She had never been more beautiful and attractive than she was then in the full bloom of her womanhood. Jack thought so, too, and often asked her to be his wife, while she as often answered him in a manner which, while it did not mean yes, certainly was not a decided no.

Chapter II.—Annie's Story Continued.

THE FEVER.

That summer our town was visited with typhoid fever in its most malignant form. Jack's mother was among the first to take it, and in their fear of the disease her servants forsook her, and as nurses were scarce Jack was left alone with her until Fan joined him and together they cared for her until she died. A week later our father was smitten with the terrible scourge, which found him an easy prey. He had never been himself since Mrs. Hathern died, and now it seemed to me as if he gladly lay down upon the bed from which he was never to rise again.

"I am so tired,—so tired!" he said, as he folded his thin hands like a child going to sleep, and scarcely moved or spoke again until toward the last when he asked that we send for Carl. "I want to see him," he said; "there's something very winsome about Carl, and I must talk to him about the little boy!"

Jack, who had been with us all the time, hiding his own pain to comfort us, telegraphed to Carl's address in Boston. It was Norah who replied, and her answer was so like her that we could not repress a smile as we read it: "He is scurripin' around the country, the Lord only knows where, but I'll find him,—sure."

When we told father he said very faintly, "I shall not be here when he comes, but tell him that I have loved him like a son, and he must avoid temptation. He is easily lead. Tell him, too, about the boy."

All the next day and the next we watched for some message from Carl, but none came. The third day, however, a telegram reached us from Norah saying, "I've

run him down at last in Canada." That evening there was another from Carl, saying, "Shall start to-morrow morning."

Oh, how hard our father tried to live until Carl reached us. It was a fierce struggle between death and an indomitable will, and it was a question which would conquer. Jack kept up his courage and ours.

"If he left Boston at nine, as he probably did, he is in New York by this time," he would say; and, later on, "He is in Washington now, and will be in Richmond to-morrow morning;" then the line of prevision was broken and we knew no more until the next day at noon, when there came a message from Richmond: "Train late. Have just arrived. Will be with you at four. Carl."

Fan read it to our father, whose eyes shone for a moment with an eager light, while his paralyzed tongue tried to speak. But he had drifted too far away for anything to hold him longer, and when the old clock in the church tower struck one he was dead. I cannot describe our anguish as we kissed his cold, white face in the last good-bye, while his eyes, to the very last, looked so lovingly at us and his pale lips tried to whisper his farewell. Even now, after many years, my heart throbs with pain as every incident of that day comes back to me. The warm sunshine, the scent of the flowers, the song of the robin, the hum of the bees, the low murmur of voices in the room where the undertaker and his assistants were at work, Jack going in and out, occasionally consulting us but mostly doing what he thought best, and later on going with the phaeton and Black Beauty to meet Carl, while Fan and I sat on the piazza waiting for him just as we waited years before when he surprised us by coming on foot across the field and in at the rear door. Now he

came more decorously, with Paul in his lap, one arm around his neck and his curly head nestling on Carl's shoulder, while he talked continually. Paul had gone with Jack to the station, eager to meet his brother; but when a tall young man, dressed in the height of fashion, stepped upon the platform and came briskly towards him, he drew back, until Jack said, "That's he; that's your brother; go and speak to him."

Then he ran forward and looking shyly up at the stranger, said, "Is you my brother Carl? I'm Paul, and papa's dead and Fan-er-Nan and Annie-mother and Katy has cried themselves sick."

With the exception of a few presents at Christmas and an occasional mention of him in his letters Carl had never evinced any interest in Paul. But no one could withstand that upturned face and the little hands held out in welcome, and lifting the child in his arms Carl kissed him lovingly.

"Yes, I'm Carl," he said, "and your brother, if you are really Paul; but, zounds! how you have grown. I have imagined you still a baby. What a stupid I must be."

After that the acquaintance progressed rapidly, and the two were on the best of terms by the time the phaeton drew up to the door and Carl sprang out to meet us. The same Carl in some respects we had known as a boy, and in others so very different. Broad-shouldered, perfectly formed, six feet tall, with a heavy mustache, and an unmistakable *air distingué*, he impressed us for a moment as he had little Paul, and I felt half afraid of him. That feeling, however, vanished the moment I heard his voice, full of sympathy, as he kissed us and said, "I am sorry that I did not get here sooner. I'd give so much

to see him alive once more. He was the best man I ever knew."

I was crying and could not answer him. Just what Fan said I do not know, until I heard her exclaim, "Katy Hathern, why are you here? I told you not to get up." Aside from the grief at the loss of our father there was a terrible fear haunting us lest Katy was coming down with the fever. For two or three days she had complained of her head, and just after father died she had been seized with a nervous chill. The doctor, whom we called at once, had ordered her to bed, and his face was very grave as he prescribed for her. She had refused to go to bed, saying she was only tired; but we persuaded her to lie down upon the couch in her room where I supposed she was until I saw her standing in the doorway, her eyes unusually bright and a deep flush upon her cheeks. She had been very small as a child, seeming younger than she really was; but within the last two or three years she had shot up rapidly, until at fifteen she was taller than either Fan or myself, with the loveliest face I have ever seen. Fan was beautiful, with a brilliant, glowing beauty like the gorgeous flowers of autumn, while Katy was fair as a lily, with a complexion like the pink-and-white shells fresh from the sea. Her eyes were large and blue as a bit of summer sky, the heavy brows and long lashes making them seem darker than they really were. Her hair, once almost yellow, was now a golden brown, with auburn tints upon it when seen in certain lights, and fell in curls upon her neck. No stranger ever looked at Katy once that did not look again, and now, as she appeared in the doorway, the purity of her complexion heightened by the black dress she wore, and her lips parted with a smile of welcome to Carl, it was not surprising that he sprang to

his feet exclaiming, "Great Scott! This can't be Katy! Why, I've always thought of you as a little girl in pantelets tumbling into the frog-pond, and by Jove! I've brought you a *doll.*"

He had both her hands in his and was looking at her with eyes which seemed to take in every point of beauty and gloat over it as over some rare treasure found unexpectedly. He had kissed Fan and me, but he did not kiss Katy. Possibly she saw the glowing fire in his eyes which I saw, and did not like it, or it might have been the mention of the *doll* which put her upon her dignity, and when he stooped as if to kiss her she drew her head back with a sideways movement natural to her when surprised or displeased. She was very gracious to him, however, and let him lead her to a seat while he sat down beside her and talked to us, still looking at her as if he would never tire of her fair girlish beauty. Then suddenly the color left her face, her head began to droop, and finally rested on his shoulder. She had fainted from her weakness and over-exertion. It was Carl who carried her up stairs and laid her upon the bed, from which she did not rise again until the summer was on the wane and there was a foreshadowing of the September haze upon the hills and woods of Lovering.

What passed during the next few days after Katy's faint was very vague and misty. I seemed like one in a horrible nightmare, my heart torn with anguish for the living and sorrow for the dead. The latter we buried with as little ceremony as possible. Letters of sympathy we had in abundance, but many of our friends were ill and others were too much afraid of the terrible scourge to come near us when they heard there was a fresh case in our midst. So, only the clergyman, the bearers, Jack, Paul, Fan and

myself and Phyllis went across the field to the hillside where, under the pines, we buried our father beside Charlie and The Boy. Even Carl was not with us. Katy had been delirious from the first and clung to him as if he were her mother. She knew the moment he left the room and was only quiet when he sat by her, as he did almost constantly, scarcely giving himself time to eat or sleep.

"We can't let Katy die," he said, and everything which could be done to save the life so dear to us was done.

We had a trained nurse from Richmond and a physician who came every other day, while the doctor from Lovering came almost every hour, it seemed to me. This was Carl's idea. He had taken the matter in charge and was spending his money like water. We had a colored woman in the kitchen to help Phyllis and he would have hired another if we had let him. Incidentally, we learned that a party of friends were waiting for him to join them in Montreal. But he telegraphed to them, "My sister is very ill and I cannot come." He called her his sister, but his manner towards her was that of the tenderest of lovers. Many times I saw him kiss her forehead when she was more than usually restless, and once he pressed his lips to hers, from which the feverish breath came scorchingly.

"Are you not afraid?" I asked, and he answered promptly, "Afraid? No. Nothing about Katy can be infectious, and I would kiss her if I knew I should have the fever a hundred times."

We tried in vain to keep Paul from the room. He was perfectly infatuated with Carl, who, in his absorption, paid little attention to the child. But that did not mat-

ter. Paul was not to be repressed. He would put his little hands into Carl's and hold it fast until the young man was compelled to notice him. By some means unknown to us he had unearthed the high chair in which Katy had done penance so many times, and dragging it into the sick-room placed it where it would be most out of the way. Here he would sit in spite of us, watching Carl as he bent over the fever-stained face and restless head upon the pillow.

"Does you sink God will let Katy die?" he once asked, as the disease progressed and the hope in our hearts was nearly gone.

"No, she shall not die!" Carl answered, fiercely, and Paul continued, "I prays every night and morning that God will make her well. Does you pray, broder Carl?"

"Oh, Paul, I am too wicked to pray. God wouldn't hear me, but he will you. Keep on, and if she lives I'll give you a much prettier riding pony than Black Beauty ever was," Carl said.

After that, when Paul was not in the sick-room, we found him on his knees at all hours of the day praying that Katy might live.

"And she will, you bet," he horrified me by saying, as he came from a dark corner where he had been earning his pony.

"Oh, Paul! Where did you get that dreadful word?" I asked.

It was Fan who explained. That morning as she was entering Katy's room, she saw Carl stoop to kiss the sick girl and heard Paul, who was as usual seated in his high chair, ask "Does you love her very much?"

"You *bet*," was the answer inadvertently given; then, as he met Fan's eyes full of reproach, Carl hastened to

say, "I beg your pardon. You see we fellows use a lot of slang when alone, and it came from me unawares. I hope that you will excuse me, and that no harm is done."

He was looking at Paul, who had caught the expression, as he caught everything out of the common, and who, in spite of our remonstrances, used it continually until Fan shut him up in the meal room, from which he emerged penitent and cured.

For weeks Katy hovered between life and death and went so far down the dark valley that we once thought she had left us forever. But she came back again, and after a few days it became evident that the crisis was past and she would live if her strength was sufficient for the struggle. For days she lay perfectly still with her eyes closed and her face as white as the pillow her shorn head rested upon. We had cut off her hair when her fever and delirium were at their height, for it seemed to trouble her, and she looked like a little child again, with her thin face and short curls clustering around her forehead. Suddenly one evening when we thought her sleeping, she opened her eyes and looked wonderingly at us. Then in a voice so low that we could scarcely hear her, she said, "What has happened, and why are you all in here, and why am I in bed? Am I very ill?" Then as her eyes fell upon Carl they lighted up with something of their old brilliancy, and her voice was steadier as she said, "Oh, Carl, you here? Yes, I remember now; but it seems so long ago."

"Yes, darling, I am here," Carl said, laying his hand on her white cheeks, which flushed quickly.

They were scarlet a moment later when Paul, who had climbed upon the bed, chimed in: "He's been here ever so long, and tissed you, oh so many times. I seen him, and

once he cried when he so't you was dead, and he's goin' to div me an ittle pony 'cause I prayed so much for God to make you well. I love Carl, don't you?"

He had blurted out everything, and I glanced nervously at Carl to see how he would take it. He only laughed and said something about "Little pitchers telling all they knew," and adding, "Why shouldn't a fellow kiss his sister if he wants to?"

Instantly Katy's eyes looked searchingly into his with an expression which told me that for her had commenced the old, old story, which has gone on since Adam and Eve first dwelt in Eden, and will go on as long as there is a tongue to tell it, or an ear to listen to it. But how was it with Carl, the young man of the world, with unbounded wealth at his command and his choice of any fair girl in the set to which he belonged? Did he really care for Katy, except as a brother might care for a sister as lovely as she was? and if he cared now, was he not of too fickle a nature to carry her image with him until time had developed her from a girl of fifteen into a full-grown woman?

Rumors had come to us in various ways of numerous flirtations which meant nothing to him and were dropped as soon as the first glamour was worn away and there were fresh fields to glean. From what we had seen of him we could understand how with his face and voice and manner he had only to stretch out his hand and gather almost any flower, just to inhale its sweetness for an hour and then drop it for another. Would he trifle with our Katy, or was it really only a brother's affection he was giving to her? These questions Fan and I asked ourselves many times during the days of Katy's convalescence, when Carl was with her so constantly, and we saw the brightness in her eyes when he came into her room, bringing fruit

and flowers and books to read, but, most of all, bringing himself. There were drives in the leafy woods as she grew stronger, and walks to the cemetery on the hill side, where we often saw them sitting side by side upon the seat under the pines, his arm sometimes around her waist and her head upon his shoulder.

"Is he making love to her, and shall we let it go on? She is too young," Fan would say, and calling Paul she would give him some flowers for the graves and tell him he might stay as long as he chose.

The chances were that Paul, who always wanted to go where Carl and Katy went, had already been there and been gotten rid of in some way, but delighted with his commission he would start across the field to execute it.

"Halloo, youngster, who told you to come here after I sent you back?" Carl said to him once, when Katy's hand lay in his and her eyes were shining like diamonds.

"Fan-er-Nan send me," Paul replied. "I've bringed flowers for papa's grave an' Charlie's an' The Boy's, an' my two first mammas, an' I'm goin' to stay."

A few incidents like this broke up the walks to the cemetery, and, as if divining our suspicions, Carl's manner to Katy changed a little and was more like that of a brother than of a lover. Katy was not one who carried her thoughts on her face, or talked much of her inner feelings. She was more reticent and self-contained than either Fan or myself, and if she noticed a change in Carl she gave no sign of it. But when about the middle of September he told us one morning at breakfast that he had letters from Boston requiring his immediate presence there, and that he must start the next day, her cheeks where the roses were beginning to bloom again became a shade paler, and there was a troubled look in her eyes

whenever they rested on Carl. He seemed very cheerful and went whistling about the house as he made his preparations for his departure. He had paid every bill contracted during Katy's illness, had bought a pretty white pony for Paul as a reward for his prayers, and done many things for our comfort.

That night,—the last he was to spend with us,—Fan found an opportunity to speak to him alone, reminding him of his mother's dying message and what our father had said of his being easily influenced. With a laugh in which there was some bitterness, he replied, " Oh, bother, don't you fear for me. I'm all right. Lots of us fellows have sprees but we do nothing bad. I shall sow my wild oats early and settle into a model married man. You'll see! "

There was a thought of Katy in Fan's mind, and she replied, " Not for years yet; and, Carl, be careful what kind of girls you consort with. Choose the purest and best. Remember that your mother said, ' If Carl falls, it will be a woman that tempts him.' "

Then for the first time Carl showed real irritation.

" Who has been talkng to you? " he said. " Has that old cat, Miss Errington, of Washington, been writing things to you? She was in Boston last winter and I met her several times. She was visiting in a house where I often called; there were three pretty girls there and once they chaffed me before her about a French grisette with whom they said I corresponded. It was just this way; you remember Julina? "

" Yes," Fan said.

" Well," Carl continued, " she wrote me a letter in French. She has been in Paris five years and must be perfect in the language. She was with her aunt, Madame

Du Bois, who keeps a pension. She addressed me as ' My dear Carl,' and signed herself ' Your devoted Julina.' I am so poor a French scholar that I couldn't make it all out, and got a fellow to help me, and by Jove he told of it to these girls as a joke on me, and I was hectored until I almost hated the name Julina. I didn't answer her letter; upon my word I didn't."

" I know nothing about Julina and care less," Fan replied, " but Miss Errington did write me that you were something of a flirt, and I should know that if she had not written it."

Again Carl seemed irritated and answered warmly, " I don't know what you mean. Can't a fellow enjoy himself with a pretty girl who enjoys herself with him? I like them all, and the one I am with last I like the best. It is my nature. I can't help it; but I'd burn my hands to the bone before I would wrong any girl, or knowingly deceive her. I have given no woman reason to think my attentions more than those of a friend, and if she thought so it was her own fault and because she did not understand me."

At this moment Katy entered the room. She had heard his last words, and there was a look of surprise in her eyes for a moment; then they suddenly hardened and her manner was more like that of a Grande Duchesse than our simple-hearted Katy as she took the chair he brought her, and bending over her with his hand on her shoulder stroked her hair and said, " You look pale, are you tired?"

Leaning her head against the back of the chair Katy closed her eyes as if she were tired, but really to repress the tears which in her weak state came so easily. Months after, when Carl's letters, at first so long and

frequent, had become like angel's visits, "short and far between," she said to me, hesitatingly, "I thought Carl liked me just as Jack likes Fanny. He never said so, it is true, but he acted it, and I was pleased and happy. There is something about him which wins you in spite of yourself. Hypnotism, perhaps. But I am over it now. I know he does not care for me as I did for him."

She spoke sadly, and I felt a throb of indignation against Carl, who had, unwittingly, perhaps, thrown a shadow on Katy's life. She was young in years, but old in much which makes mature womanhood, and the attentions of a man like Carl could not fail to impress her with a deeper feeling than sisters feel for brothers. He still wrote her occasionally,—bright, chatty letters, full of protestations of affection for herself and all of us, and telling her of a life of which she knew nothing. But he didn't come again, and he seemed at last to have passed out of our lives, into which another exciting interest had entered.

Chapter III.—Annie's Story Continued.

THE ENGAGEMENT.

The winter succeeding father's death was a hard one for us. Our effort to economize and still not seem to do so was a struggle, and probably did not deceive anyone. Jack understood all our needs and straits and helped us wherever he could,—not in money, but in many ways where a man's advice and assistance are invaluable. He was now agent for a large firm which paid him well, and

as he was traveling only a part of the time we saw a great deal of him, and the evenings when he was not with us seemed monotonous and long. Sometimes when the days were fine and he had leisure for it he took long walks with Fan in the woods, and when they came back I used to notice a brightness in his manner and a look in Fan's eyes which I had not seen there before. Christmas week and the one following he was in town, negotiating a sale for his mother's house. When he left it was early on the morning train, and that night, when Fan and I were alone in our room and she was brushing her glossy hair, she turned suddenly to me and said, "I have promised to marry Jack. Didn't you notice that he looked more like an idiot than usual?"

I was standing by my dressing bureau with my back to her, so that she could not see the whiteness of my face as I put my hand upon my heart, where for a moment there was the sharpest pain I had ever known or ever shall again. I had expected this would come sometime and I thought I was prepared, but now that it had come, I found myself a weak, wicked woman, loving a man who was to marry my sister, and who, under no circumstances, could ever have cared for me. Rallying in a moment and laughing at her likening him to an idiot, I replied, "You forget I have not seen him since I left you with him last night in the parlor and went to bed with a headache. I suppose it was after I came up stairs."

"Yes," she nodded, and after a moment went on; "What a great awkward baby of a fellow he is. Why he almost cried when I consented to marry him, and went off into a tantrum which frightened me and made me half wish I hadn't said yes. I do believe if I were to go back on him now it would kill him."

"Go back on him!" I said. "You could never do that. Go back on Jack; the best and noblest man that ever lived!"

She had drawn her long hair across her face, and through it her black eyes looked curiously at me as she said, "I believe *you* are in love with Jack, or could easily be, and I wish it were you instead of me. Don't stare at me as if you thought me a fiend. I like him; sometimes I think I love him. I dare say I should love him desperately if there were any danger of losing him, but I can't help wishing he had more style, and more money. He is a gentleman, of course, but he has not the manner of Carl or Col. Errington. Half a dozen times I have been on the point of accepting the latter. You know his letter is still unanswered; but, you don't know that in his letter of sympathy after father died there was a slip I did not show you. Just four words, "Are you still considering?" That shows he has remembered all these years, and since we have had so hard a struggle with poverty my thoughts have more than once turned to him, or rather to what he could give me."

"Fan Hathern!" I exclaimed, indignantly. "You are not worthy the love of a good man like Jack, and I am half tempted to tell him so."

"I wish you would; but you needn't knock things over before you do it," she answered, with the utmost unconcern, as in my excitement I ran against the table on which the lamp was standing. "You know the plateau on the hill where the Ponsonby mansion stood before it was burned?" she continued. "Well, it is for sale, and Jack is going to buy it and build a pretty cottage on it with all the modern improvements. He was just like a boy talking about it. He has more money than I sup-

posed, or will have, when his mother's estate is settled, and his salary is good. So we shall begin housekeeping in fine style for Lovering, but—bah, nothing to what I would like."

I was never so angry with Fan in my life as I was that night when she showed me the heartless side of her, and I staid angry for two or three days until Jack came with a plan for the cottage he was going to build on the Ponsonby plateau. Then I forgave her when I saw her eyes light up as she lifted her face to be kissed and sat down close to him, while with one arm around her waist he explained the plan to us both. It was as nearly perfect as could be, especially the square hall with the fireplace, the deep window seats and the broad staircase, with the landing where his mother's tall clock was to stand. There were to be bay windows and alcoves and verandas, above and below, and a room for Katy, and Paul, and myself whenever we chose to stay there, which he hoped would be very often. He *was* like a boy in his enthusiasm and Fan caught the spirit, too, and began to furnish the different rooms in a manner which took my breath away. Jack had thought to use some of his mother's furniture, but Fan promptly vetoed the idea. It was too old fashioned, she said. She must have everything fresh and new, and she fitted up room after room, one with pink, one with blue, one with red. Her own, with the bay window overlooking the town and the valley and hills beyond, was to be of white enameled wood, with touches of gold here and there, while the window itself was bewildering with its white silk canopy and fringe of gold, its fleecy curtains and soft cushioned window stools and chairs.

If Jack had known Fan as well as I did he would have

understood that much of her talk was for effect, that she never expected to have a house furnished as she was furnishing it in fancy. Unfortunately, he was apt to take things literally, and as he saw his pocket-book emptied and himself heavily in debt if he carried out her plans, he gasped a little and said, "That would be lovely, but I am afraid I can't afford it all at first. Sometime we will have it, but now we must cut the garment according to the cloth."

Instantly Fan's face clouded. She lost her interest in the plan, and nearly lost it in Jack, who was, however, too supremely happy to notice it. She had promised to be his wife the next Christmas, when the house which was now on paper would be ready for her, and knowing that he would sooner die than break his word to her, he believed in and trusted her, and I never saw any human being more happy than he seemed on the nights when he used to come to us, bringing so much sunshine with his kindness and thoughtfulness that the winter did not seem half as long and dreary as we thought it would be with our father gone. We missed him everywhere, it is true; but as far as possible Jack filled his place, planning for us, transacting all our business, and collecting many a dollar which but for him we could never have recovered. Occasionally we heard from Carl, who wrote that he was studying law and was as steady as an old clock. Once Norah wrote asking if Phyllis had done this and that and presuming she hadn't. Then she spoke of Carl, of whom she was very proud. "About the firstest young man in Boston," she said, "with all the girls after him. But he don't seem to hanker in particular for none of 'em. He has a way, though, of makin' 'em all b'lieve she's the one. But, good land, 'taint wuth no girl's while to set

her heart on him. He's like a wind-mill, turnin' and turnin'. He's stiddy, though, and keeps middlin' good hours —for Boston."

This was encouraging so far as Carl was concerned, but there was a shadow on Katy's face, and for several days we missed the music of her voice as she moved rather dejectedly around the house, apparently pondering Norah's words, "Tain't wuth no girl's while to set her heart on Carl."

Chapter IV.—Annie's Story Continued.

THE HOUSE THAT JACK BUILT.

Owing to some defect found in the title to the Ponsonby plateau after Jack had bargained for it, there was a delay of two or three months and it was the first of June before the way was clear for him to begin his new house. As he meant to superintend it himself and work with his own hands as much as possible there was ample time to finish it before Christmas, the day appointed for the wedding. After many consultations and a great deal of walking around the plateau to get the very best point for views in every direction, it was decided to build the cottage a little to the north of the spot where the Ponsonby house had stood. This necessitated a new cellar, and on the morning when the work was to commence Jack came to us and said, "I wish you'd all come up and see the first furrow turned. It will be something like laying the corner stone."

As the day was one of Phyllis's "clarin' up" days we

were glad to escape from the discomfort of it, and deciding to have a kind of picnic we took our lunch with us, and sitting down on a bit of broken wall in the shadow of a dogwood tree Katy, Paul and I looked on while Fan and Jack steadied the plow and drove the horses around the ground staked out for the cellar.

"Don't this make you think of Romulus and Remus building Rome? I don't believe, though, that Jack will kill me if I jump over the wall," Fan said, laughingly, as she let go the plow and bounding over the furrow came up to where we were sitting, flushed with exercise and seemingly very happy.

When the horses had done all they could and the workmen had taken the cellar in hand we sat down to our lunch, which was nearly finished when we heard the sound of voices coming up the hill and a moment after a gentleman and lady came into view, walking very leisurely, but quickening their steps when they saw us.

"Colonel and Miss Errington," Fan exclaimed. "What evil genius sent them here to-day!"

Was it an evil genuis, or good, or was it fate which sent them there? I often asked myself afterwards, when a great happiness and a great sorrow followed as the result of their coming.

"Here you are! What a climb, and how tired and hot I am," Miss Errington said, as, after shaking hands with us, she dropped down upon the nearest big stone and began to fan herself.

It was years since we had seen either the Colonel or his sister, but it did not seem to me that they had changed much. Both were a little stouter, perhaps, and there were a few white hairs in the Colonel's side-whiskers, worn after the English fashion. Otherwise he was the same tall,

elegant man, with a military look and air, and the same cold, hard expression in his eyes which, as they had always done, softened when they rested on Fan. Every color became her, but to me she had never been as handsome as since she had worn black. It toned down her brilliant color, and made her look more womanly and lovable. That day her dress was a thin muslin, which showed her white neck and arms, and she had pinned some white roses at her throat and fastened some in her hair "to scratch Jack when he tries to kiss me," she said, but really because she inwardly chafed against black and wanted some color to relieve it.

The Colonel was very polite to me, and said to Katy, "Upon my soul, how you have grown!" and "What little shaver is this?" to Paul. Then he took Fan's hand and held it much longer than he had held mine, and looked at her until she shrank from him and moved nearer to Jack. Miss Errington was explaining that, as they were in Richmond and had not seen us in years, they had decided to surprise us with a call.

"We drove from the station to the house," she said, "and found your factotum, Phyllis, asleep on the front piazza with mop and pails and broom at her side. It was a work of time to rouse her, but when she was fairly awake she was profuse in her excuses, saying she was that tired in her bones that she "had done drapped asleep arsidentally," and also that you were all digging the cellar for Mas'r Jack's and Miss Fanny's new house, from which I infer that congratulations are *en regle*, or are you already married?"

"No, oh no!" Fan exclaimed, while Jack put his hand on her shoulder with an air of proud ownership and said, "Not yet, but I invite you to our wedding next Christmas."

"Christmas! That's a long way off," the Colonel rejoined, his manner changing at once from one of indifference, or disappointment, or both, to one almost hilarious. I was told that I looked younger than when he last saw me. Katy was delicately complimented on her wonderful beauty. Paul was taken up and set upon the highest bit of wall, which he made believe was a horse, and Fan was reminded of the saucy things she said to him when he first invaded our house as a Federal officer with his soldiers, and asked if she hated them all now as much as she did then.

"I should if they came on the same errand," was her reply, and then walking slowly around the broken ground the Colonel asked if *that* was to be the size of the house?

"Yes, and you'd be surprised to know how much room there will be in it," Jack said, beginning eagerly to explain that here was the hall, there the dining-room, there the library and sitting-room, and "upstairs, right here, with the bay window, where we get the finest view, our room," he added, with a world of love and tenderness on the words *our room*.

"Ah, yes, I see, all very fine," the Colonel rejoined, with a look I did not like, it seemed so like the look a snake might give the bird it meant to destroy. "And what do you intend to call this Paradise? You Southerners, like the English, usually have names for your places," was his next question, to which Jack replied, "We haven't thought so far as that. The people who used to live here called the place The Plateau, but I'd like something else. Suppose you name it."

"How would 'The House that Jack built' do? the Colonel said, in an ironical tone which irritated me, but which was lost sight of by the rest because of Paul, who, catching the words, "The House that Jack built," began at once to repeat the rhyme which he knew by heart.

"Bravo, young man!" the Colonel said, patting the child's head, while Fan suggested that we return to The Elms, where we could offer a cup of tea to our guests.

Jack excused himself, as he must stay with his men, and the rest of us went slowly down the hill, Miss Errington, Katy, Paul and myself in advance, the Colonel and Fan in the rear, walking very slowly and engaged in what seemed a very animated conversation. Phyllis had finished her "clarin' up," donned her Sunday dress and turban, and in anticipation of our return was moulding biscuits for tea. It was served on the rear porch, where the clematis and honeysuckle shielded us from the heat of the June sun, and after it was over Miss Errington asked Katy to sing for her. The song was followed by another and another, during which the Colonel, who cared little for music, walked up and down the long piazza with Fan, whose cheeks were very red when she at last joined us at my call.

Miss Errington was going to Saratoga in August and would like to take Katy with her if Fan and I were willing. As all important decisions were usually left to Fan I beckoned her to us. Before she could reply to the proposition, which Miss Errington repeated, the Colonel interposed, "That's a capital idea, but why not invite Miss Fanny also? You can chaperon two young ladies as well as one, and I am sure she would like to see something of the north she affects to hate."

This suggestion was warmly seconded by Miss Errington, while Fan stood irresolute. I did not think she would accept without seeing Jack, and was surprised when she said at last, "I should like it so much if Miss Errington really wants me."

Miss Errington did want her, and as I was not con-

sulted it was arranged that Fan and Katy should go to Washington the last week in July and from there to Saratoga in company with Miss Errington. Nothing had been said of the Colonel's going, and when I asked what he meant to do, he replied, "Oh, stay at home; Saratoga is not to my taste."

It was later than usual that night when Jack came to us, more tired than I had ever seen him. He had worked harder than any of his men, he said, as he leaned back in his chair and asked where Fan was. She was putting Paul to bed, and it was Katy who told him of the proposed trip.

"Fanny going!" he repeated, his face flushing for a moment, and then turning paler than before. She had just come in, and going up to him began to smooth his hair and forehead, saying, "You poor boy, you are all tired out. You ought not to work so hard. Let those lazy negroes do it. Yes, I thought I'd go; it is a good chance to see a little of the world before I settle down into a Joan. You don't care, do you?"

She was still manipulating his hair, with her face very near to his and something so coaxing in her voice that a man less in love than Jack would have yielded to it and granted what she wished.

"I am glad to have you go, if it pleases you," he said. "Only I thought you might like to be here and watch the house as it progresses. But you'll be back before we get to the rooms."

"Oh, yes," she answered very promptly. "I shall be back before you reach the rooms. It is only for August, and I have always wanted to see Saratoga."

"Is the Colonel going?" Jack asked and Fan answered, "No, indeed, and I'm glad; I think him horrid and so patronizing."

The fact that the Colonel was not to make one of the

party reconciled Jack to Fan's absence more than anything else, and in spite of his fatigue he grew very cheerful and quite like himself as the evening wore on. That night in our room there was a spirited discussion between Fan and myself with regard to her proposed trip, I arguing that for Jack's sake she should stay at home, and she declaring she would not. It was the only bit of life she'd ever see, she said, and she meant to take it. She'd never been beyond the smoke of our chimney, and after she was married she should of course settle down, just as all the Lovering women did, into a domestic drudge. Poverty was hateful, and she was glad she was for once going to know how rich people lived and play rich herself.

The next morning she was very pliable and sweet, and spent half the day at The Plateau with Jack whom she brought home with her to supper, and then sat with him alone on the piazza until the clock struck eleven and old Phyllis appeared on the scene in wonderful night-gear, with a tallow dip in her hand, saying she "had done hearn sunthin', and thought mebby thar was burgles in the house."

Chapter V.—Annie's Story Continued.

SEEING THE WORLD.

It was the last week in July when Fan and Katy left us for Washington. Jack, Paul and I went to the station with them, waving and kissing our hands to them as long as we could see them standing upon the rear platform and waving to us. How often now do I recall Fanny as she was then starting out to see the world. Although twenty-six she scarcely looked more than twenty, so lightly had the years touched her bright face and starry eyes, which tears made softer and lovelier as she said good-bye to us. With wonderful skill and some help from the fashion plates she had remodeled her wardrobe, adding a little to it as we could afford, but refusing the money Jack offered her, saying he knew she must need it and he wanted her to hold her own among the fashionables she was to meet.

"No, Jackey, dear," she said, "I can't take money from you now; but when I am your wife, it will not be safe to offer it to me. And don't you worry, I shall hold my own."

At first she wrote three times a week to Jack, and her letters were very satisfactory, judging from his manner after receiving them. To me she wrote once a week, but it was from Katy that I had the most reliable information. They had reached Washington safely, and been met by Colonel and Miss Errington in a superb turnout, with coachman and footman in livery. The house was more elegant than anything Katy had ever imagined, and all its appointments of service and servants were perfect, and Fan adapted herself to everything with the air of a duchess born to the purple. Both the Colonel and his sister were

very kind and had taken them everywhere in and around Washington, which was a beautiful city, but so hot that after a week's sojourn they were glad to leave it for Saratoga. At the very last moment the Colonel had decided to go with them. He had said he couldn't be hired to spend a month in that frivolous place, but when in the morning they came down to breakfast there was his baggage with their's in the hall waiting for the expressman, and he was in his light traveling suit giving directions. They were stopping at the United States, where they had a suite of rooms on the second floor, parlor, three bedrooms, dressing-rooms and bath-rooms, and were quite the distinguished guests of the house. After she had been in Saratoga two or three weeks Katy wrote again.

"We know everybody worth knowing and everybody knows us and are very polite and attentive, notwithstanding our plain black gowns, which contrast so strongly with the elegant dresses worn morning, noon and night, any one of which must have cost more than all our simple wardrobe. There is a story going the rounds that we were very wealthy before the war,—that being on the frontier we were overrun by both armies, our house burned, our negroes stolen, and that we lost all we had. Fan, they say, was a fierce rebel, and with a revolver once kept Col. Errington and his whole regiment at bay when he tried to quarter his men upon us. All this fiction seems to make the people think more of us. Funny, isn't it? Fan is the belle of the season and more flattered and complimented and sought after than any young lady here. And you don't know how beautiful she is even in her simple black lawn and linen collar, with her brilliant complexion, her eyes like diamonds and her smile which brings every man to her feet. You ought to see her sit-

ting in one of the big chairs on the piazza, or in the hall, surrounded by half a dozen admirers of all ages from sixteen to sixty. She knows the right word to say to each one, and keeps them all on the *qui vive*, while the Colonel, who is always very near, looks on with an expression which says as plain as words can say, 'Don't go too far, gentlemen. It will do no good.' His attentions are constant and *so* delicate and marked that people begin to associate their names together, and I have been asked if they were not engaged. I said no, decidedly, and told them about Jack, whom she is to marry at Christmas. In less than twenty-four hours, so fast does gossip travel here, I overheard one lady tell another that the eldest Miss Hathern was engaged to a wealthy Virginia planter who lived near Richmond.

"'That splendid girl engaged to a farmer,' the second lady exclaimed, and her friend replied, 'No, a planter.'

"'Oh, that will do,' the other said, in a satisfied tone, 'as if there were any difference between a planter and a farmer except the spelling.' Do you see any?

"That night Fan and I quarrelled for the first time in our lives. She said that I had no business to tell that she was engaged and spoil her fun, and I said she had no business to flirt so outrageously with everybody, and that if she didn't quit it I'd write to Jack. Then she began to cry and wish she was dead. She didn't see why when a glimpse of the world was given her to enjoy she couldn't be allowed to enjoy it in her own way, and if she chose to have a taste of the world, the flesh and the devil, meaning the Colonel, she didn't know why I should interfere. She intended to marry Jack, but she meant to have a good time first before settling down in dull old Lovering, which she hated. Then her mood changed and she

acknowledged that she was wrong, and that night she wrote Jack the longest letter she has written since we came here, and the most loving, I dare say. The next day she was as shy and demure as a nun, which sent the whole pack after her fiercer than ever, but she cut them dead and kept close to the Colonel as if for protection, and drove with him to the lake and didn't get back until ten o'clock. She was gone with him again this afternoon, and the people crowded on to the piazza to see them off in his stylish turnout,—the finest here by far."

This letter troubled me greatly, and I wondered what Jack would think of it. I remembered the long letter he had received and how happy he had looked after it. I had seen him reading it at least three different times, until I felt sure he must know it by heart. After that her letters were very short, both to him and to me. She had not time to write much, she said, she was kept in such a whirl, which grew dizzier as the season drew near its close. She never mentioned the Colonel, or any other gentleman in particular, but was loud in her praise of Katy, whose flowerlike beauty, she said, had turned the heads of half the men in Saratoga.

"And her voice," she wrote; "people rave about it as if she were Patti herself. It seems the Diva sang here once years ago, when she was about Katy's age, and a woman who heard her says she likes Katy's voice better and that she is far prettier, she is so fair and sweet and unconscious of her great gift. I have let her sing twice in public for some charities; they are always getting up something of that sort and levying on any talent there may be here. Prejudiced as I am against the stage I was proud of Katy, she was so modest and unaffected, and received the applause of the people so shyly and sweetly.

Miss Errington has a plan in her mind for keeping Katy in Washington and giving her lessons. She will probably write you about it. I shall oppose it if there is a *career* behind it. I have not yet reached a point where I want my sister a public character, with her photographs in the shop windows, and horrid wood-cuts of her in the papers. I intend to have her at The Plateau a good deal of the time to keep me from stagnating. Just think of it! Only Jack and me, sitting there alone, admiring each other! Well, nothing can blot out the remembrance of the good time I am having now seeing the world, and there is so much to see and enjoy, if one only had money.

"I hoped at one time Carl might join us. Katy has had a few lines from him; did she tell you? He has gone with a party to some outlandish place beyond the Rockies. There are some people here from Boston who know him well and speak highly of him. They say, however, that he is a little too much inclined to forget the friends of yesterday for those of to-day. We know that, don't we? An uncle on his father's side has recently died and left him what we should think a fortune. So he is richer now than ever. I wish we had an uncle to die and leave us some money. But, alas! if we ever had an uncle he was dry as dust long ago.

"Miss Errington came in just here and proposed that, instead of going back to Washington, we take a trip to Quebec and Montreal and Chicago, returning by way of the Falls and New York, where, she says, I can buy my wedding trousseau. That last sounds fine, don't it? I wonder if she suspects how poor we really are and how little there is for a trousseau. I don't believe that, all told, we can get together a hundred dollars without drawing on the small sum we have in the bank in Richmond, or

selling Black Beauty. It may come to that yet. And what do you think of the plan? Katy is crazy to go, and I am just as anxious. I see no reason why we should not, and I have virtually said we would, provided you do not object too strenuously, and you are too unselfish an old darling to do that. And so is Jack. How is the dear boy? 'Working like an ox to get the nest ready for his bird,' he wrote me. Oh, Jack, Jack! How good he is; far too good for me! His letters always make me cry. I feel my unworthiness so after reading them. I really mean to settle down into the best and most domestic of wives after I have seen the world.

"A gentleman has sent up for me to drive with him, so good-bye. We shall leave here within a week.

"Lovingly, FAN."

CHAPTER VI.—ANNIE'S STORY CONTINUED.

FURNISHING THE HOUSE THAT JACK BUILT.

IT was no use to protest against the journey which would keep Fan and Katy from home four or five weeks longer, and all Jack and I could do was to make the best of it. Jack looked very sober when we talked it over together.

"I am glad for her to enjoy herself and see the world, as she calls it," he said, smiling sadly; "but I miss her so much. I am always wanting to ask her advice and know if what I am doing suits her. You will have to take her place in that respect."

He was looking so tired and pale that night that even

Phyllis noticed it and asked, "What has done happened to Mas'r Jack; he don't look so peart-like as he did? Is he frettin' for Miss Fanny? She don't or'to go to the ends of the airth an' her the same as merried. No man would bar it."

Phyllis and I were thrown so much together for companionship that she usually told me what she thought.

" 'Pears mos' like she was never comin' back," she said more than once, and in spite of myself I was haunted by a similar presentiment, which followed me everywhere, and made me very kind and pitiful towards Jack.

He was working very hard, and with his labor and under his supervision the house was going up faster than ever a house went up before in Lovering. The walls were all enclosed and the rooms divided off according to the plan, which Jack often brought to me, asking if I could suggest any change. I could not. It was perfect as it was. New houses were not common in Lovering. This was the first since the war, and to me it seemed the quintessence of all that was pretty and desirable. Nearly every day all through September and on into October I went with Paul to The Plateau to watch the work as it progressed, and to please Jack, who said that he got on better when I was there,—that I seemed a part of Fan herself, and if he couldn't have her I was next best. This might be called a questionable compliment, but I was grateful for crumbs. I doubt if Fan on her western tour, which finally extended as far as Colorado and Salt Lake City, was much happier than I was those long autumn days, when I sat in a niche in the wall and watched Jack busy with his men, of whom there were at least a dozen, so anxious was he to surprise Fan when she came home. How kind and attentive he was, coming often to

me and trying to shield me from the sun if it were too warm, or from the wind if it blew cold from the woods or hills.

"You don't know what a comfort it is to have you here," he said to me one cool morning in October as he sat down beside me, pulling my shawl over my shoulder and unconsciously letting his hand rest there a moment as a brother might have done. "I wish you were going to live with Fanny and me. We need you to balance our nervousness and excitement, you are so quiet and self-contained. It will be a happy man who gets you, Annie."

"Oh, Jack," was all I said, as I drew away from him and turned my head that he might not see the waves of crimson on my face, or hear the loud beating of my heart as I could hear it.

Not for worlds would I have let him know that the girl he thought so self-contained and quiet loved him with a love far more enduring than any which Fan had ever given to him. It was a sin, I knew, or soon would be, and I fought against it with all my might, only to find it growing stronger as the days went by and the time drew near when he would be the husband of my sister. My only resource when his spell was over me was to talk to him of Fan,—where she was, what she was doing, what she was seeing, and when she would be home. To all this he responded readily, especially the coming home, and how he meant to surprise her.

One day in October when I went with Paul to The Plateau he met me with a beaming face. Some land of his near Richmond, which he had scarcely thought worth anything, had been bought by a gentleman from the north, who was going to put two or three houses upon it.

"I feel rich," he said,—"so rich that I am going to commit the extravagance of buying lace curtains, the real sort, not shams, a moquette carpet and upright Steinway for the parlor. That will please Fanny. She likes moquettes, they tread so softly, and I know she will like a piano. I heard her say that no house was furnished without one. Don't you approve?" he continued, as I did not answer.

A moquette, at the prices they then brought with us, was an extravagance, while the Steinway was a superfluity. Fan had taken a few lessons and could play simple music. But she didn't care for it and seldom tried the superb instrument which Mrs. Hathern had brought from Boston. Under these circumstances it seemed to me that the money he must pay for a Steinway could be better expended, and I said so, giving as a reason that Fan was not much of a musician.

"Yes, she is," Jack answered quickly; "I've heard her sing Bonny Doon when she actually brought tears, I was so sorry for the chap who wrote it. Burns, wasn't it? That's my favorite, words and all. And the way Fanny sang it. I want to hear it again in this room; and Dixie. How she can rattle that off; and Fisher's Hornpipe, and Money Musk. They are worth all the classics in the world, and Bonny Doon is a hundred times better than the hifalutin things you hear at concerts, when the singer almost turns black in the face, and wiggles and twists and stands on tiptoe as if she were going up bodily with her voice, which, when it gets up as far as it can go ends with a screech like she was in a fit. No, sir! Give me the good, old-fashioned tunes such as Fan can play."

Evidently Jack's taste for music was not cultivated,

and I laughed merrily at his tirade against fashionable singing, and then watched him as he drummed on the window stool in imitation of playing a piano, and whistled the air of Bonny Doon. I knew he would buy the moquette and the Steinway, and said no more to discourage him.

"Now come up to *our* room," he said, after he had finished Bonny Doon and tried a few notes of Suwanee River, another of his favorites.

I followed him up to what was to be his sleeping-room, and which he never entered without removing his hat as reverently as if it had been a church. It was a sacred place to him, and the one he meant to make the most attractive in the house.

"Fanny will sit here a great deal," he said, "because the view is so fine, and then she can see me coming up the hill on my way home. I know just how she will look and can see her now, watching and waiting, and throwing me kisses. What is that they sing in the prayer meetings?" and he began to hum,

> "Will anyone then at the beautiful gate,
> Be watching and waiting for me."

He was very musical that afternoon because he was so happy, and Fan was very real to him watching by the window as he came up the hill to what would be Paradise because she was in it. Do the hearts of men like Jack break more easily when betrayed? I do not know, but I remember thinking that God would hardly forgive the woman who played false to one who trusted her as Jack trusted Fan.

"She spoke of having this room all white and gold," he said, "and I am going to finish it up in white wood, polished to look like marble with faint lines of gilt in it.

There's a chamber set in Richmond, part willow work and part white wood, with scrolls of gold here and there, and on the head-board a medallion, with the figure of a little girl in crimson cloak, with the hood brought over her head and looking just as Fanny looked years ago when a child and I drew her to school on my sled that winter we had so much snow. The eyes of the girl in the medallion smile at me just as Fanny's did when I looked back at her to see how she liked it. Don't you remember? You were there, too."

I did remember very well the day when Fanny had her first sled ride, and in her new cloak, which was scarlet instead of crimson, looked like a little queen as she sat on the sled, while I trudged at her side in the snow, proud of that privilege, and especially proud when, on going up a hill which was nearly bare, Jack let me help him pull her, and told me I made a very nice little filly. He had asked Fan to get off in the steepest place, where the snow had melted and made it muddy, and she had stormed and kicked and said she wouldn't, telling him he was her slave and was to do her bidding. He had been her slave ever since, and I had trudged beside them and was trudging still, with, God knows, no envy or bitterness in my heart because of the drudgery, or that Fan was always preferred before me, but often with the thought of the joy it would be to be loved by a man like Jack Fullerton.

"Yes, I remember it," I said, and he continued, "I do want to buy that set, but if I get the moquette and the Steinway it is beyond my pile at present, unless—"

He stopped and his face beamed as with a sudden inspiration. He had taken his watch from his pocket to see what time it was, and was looking at it intently. It was a stem-winder and very handsome, and Jack was very

proud of it. I suspected what was in his mind, but said nothing, lest I might be mistaken. As it was getting late and growing rather cool I left him settling in his mind where the different pieces of furniture would stand provided he bought the coveted set. Outside in the yard I found Paul, who had preferred to stay with the workmen while I went through the rooms with Jack. In climbing over the broken wall he had fallen upon his back or side and was crying, saying it hurt him to walk. No bones were broken, nor were any of his limbs sprained that I could find, and after a while he signified his readiness to go home, limping a little but utterly refusing the poultice which Phyllis made that night and which was big enough to encircle his entire body. The next morning he seemed all right, except for an occasional halt in walking, and I forgot the incident entirely in the greater interest of house-furnishing.

A week later Jack, who had been to Richmond, came to me one night and told me the moquette and piano and lace curtains and chamber set were bought and paid for, and would be at The Plateau in a few days. Glancing at his vest I saw that the gold chain was gone, and in its place was a black ribbon, and then I knew what he had done.

"What time is it, please?" I asked.

Flushing and hesitating he finally drew out a plain silver watch and held it up to me.

"Yes, I've gone and done done it, as Phyllis would say," he said, laughingly. "I've sold my gold watch and bought me a silver one, which keeps just as good time. Fan always told me I was too fond of jewelry,—that my big chain looked flashy. She'll be pleased with the black ribbon, and that child in the medallion is so like

her. Seems as if she would speak to me and say 'Get up, old nigger,' just as Fan did the day I drew her on my sled."

There was no use in protesting, now that the deed was done. So I said nothing, and after a moment Jack exclaimed, as he put his hand in his pocket, "By Jove I came near forgetting it; I have a letter for you, which I found in the office as I came down. It is addressed in Fanny's handwriting and mailed in New York. They are so far on their way home, and must be here soon. I wonder she didn't write to me, too. What does she say? It's a fat one, any way; there's something in it from Katy probably," he continued, as he saw me take out a note and glance at it before commencing to read the letter.

I knew it was not always safe to read Fan's letters aloud, and I ran my eyes hastily over this one, while Jack waited impatiently. The travelers were in New York at the Fifth Avenue Hotel, and Fanny was wild over what she had seen and was seeing, especially on Broadway, where she had done a little shopping.

"Such lovely things," she wrote, "but so expensive, and my purse is so very small. Why, one suit, such as I want, will take my entire fund. I have set my heart on a cloth dress, tailor made, which is awfully stylish, and will do to wear all winter, to mill and to meeting,—to call in and to receptions,—only there will not be any in Lovering, where the people have as much as they can do to get enough to eat without throwing away their money on frivolities. More's the pity; and how stupid I shall find it after seeing the world. Don't be surprised if some day, when you come up to The Plateau, you find me dangling from a beam in the cellar. If so, put on my head-

stone 'Died of a broken neck, caused by *ennui*.' But what nonsense. Let's come to business, at once. I *must* have more money, and this is what you are to do, 'Sell Black Beauty.'

"Oh," I gasped, with a feeling similar to what I might have felt if she had said "Sell Phyllis."

"What is it? What's the matter?" Jack asked, and without stopping to think, I replied, "She wants to sell Black Beauty to buy her a tailor-made gown." "Sell Black Beauty, her pony! Never!" Jack exclaimed, while I read on:

"I don't ride him very often now, and when I am married I shall have less use for him. He is getting old any way, seventeen or eighteen, and eating his head off. I am very fond of him, and there's a big lump in my throat when I think of parting with him, but that gown is so ravishingly pretty and so becoming, and I want it so much. Old Mrs. Arthur has asked me for Black Beauty a number of times. He is just right to amble around the neighborhood with her on his back or in the phaeton behind him. She will take good care of him and pet him more than I do. Go and see her, Annie, and if she'll give a hundred dollars,—that's what she offered last summer,—take it, and send at once before the gown is gone. You don't know how swell I feel driving to Arnold's and Stewart's and Lord and Taylor's in Miss Errington's handsome carriage, with two black men in livery, nor how obsequious they are at these places to those who come in carriages. Do you remember a copy which a Yankee schoolmaster set for me years ago, and which we thought so funny, 'Money makes the mare go?' It is true, and the more money you have the faster the mare goes. 'Fan is an idiot!' I think I hear you say. Per-

haps I am, but idiot or not, sell Black Beauty and send me the money.

"When am I coming home? I really don't know for sure. In time to be married, I suppose. Miss Errington suggests that whatever dress-making I have to do be done in Washington under her supervision and by her dress-maker, who comes to the house. If I do this I shall, of course, stay longer than I at first intended. Tell Jack not to fret. He will have enough of me after we are married. How is the house progressing? And how is Paul's lameness? Better, I hope. Miss Errington, to whom I read your letter, made me very nervous by suggesting that his fall might result in hip disease. That would be dreadful. Paul a cripple! It can't be; Miss Errington is always seeing scare-crows. She is exceedingly kind, however, and will send a note in this letter asking if she can keep Katy during the winter and give her every advantage for musical instruction. I have consented, and you may as well. Katy will of course go home for Thanksgiving, and Miss Errington has invited herself to acompany her,—or rather us,—when we come.

"Did I tell you the Colonel was to sail for Europe the 3d of November in the Celtic? As she will wish to see him off you may expect us the 25th,—three days before Thanksgiving. That is Miss Errington's plan. She just came in to give me her note. "Lovingly,

"FAN."

"P. S. I shall write Jack to-morrow."

I read parts of this letter to Jack, skipping what I thought he ought not to hear. He looked very grave when I finished it, and said, "She is putting off her coming as long as she can. It is three weeks to the 25th. Does dress-making take so long?"

It took a good while, I told him, although Fan could not have a great deal to do. Then I spoke of Black Beauty, lamenting that he must be sold. We have had him so long that he seemed like one of us, with human instincts and affections.

"Isn't there some other way of getting that tailor gown, if she must have it?" I said, looking up at Jack, whose face wore an expression different from any I had ever seen there.

I thought he consigned the tailor-made gown to perdition, but was not sure, he spoke so low. What I did understand was that Black Beauty would not be sold to Mrs. Arthur, and that I was to do nothing about it until I saw him again. Then he went away, seeming a good deal excited for Jack, and banged the door so hard behind him that Paul, who had been sitting very quietly in his high chair, asked "Is Jack mad?"

This reminded me of what Fanny had said of possible hip disease, and I remembered with a pang that Paul had not played horse on father's cane quite as much, or run quite as fast since that fall on The Plateau. When I questioned him, however, he said he had no pain except once in a while when he was tired and then "something hurts me here," and he put his hand low down on his back. I was not quite reassured, and determined to consult the village doctor the next time I saw him. Then I read Fan's letter again, feeling as if an incubus had dropped from me because the Colonel was going abroad. Fan had never mentioned him before, but there had always been in my mind an undefinable feeling of uneasiness as if he were a dark shadow falling between her and Jack.

It was two days before I saw the latter again and when he came he was in a very different mood. He had re-

ceived Fan's letter of four pages crossed and so full of love and pretty sayings that if he could he would have bought her ten tailor-made gowns.

"I was a brute the last time I was here," he said, "I was so disappointed that Fanny was not coming sooner. Old Mrs. Arthur can't have Black Beauty, for I've bought him myself. I can't part with him. I've had too many plans of riding through the woods and around the country with Fanny at my side. She never looks better than when on Beauty's back. Here is the money."

He held out a hundred dollar bill, which I was to send at once and ask no questions as to where he got it. I think he borrowed it and at first refused to take it, but he overruled my objections, and that night it was on its way to New York. Four days later an answer came to Jack and to me. The gown was bought, and Jack was the dearest, most indulgent fellow in the world, and she was beginning to be very impatient to see him and all of us. They were going to Washington the next day and in two weeks were coming home. It was the nicest letter she had written in some time, and Jack went off whistling to The Plateau, where the house was nearly completed, so far as masons, carpenters and painters were concerned. The plastering was dry and the paint nearly so. Phyllis had cleared up the rubbish, and cleaned the windows and floors, which were ready for the carpets, which, with the furniture, were standing about everywhere in boxes and bales. Nearly all Lovering had been over the house, pronouncing it perfect.

"Wait till it is furnished and we give a house-warming; then see what you think," Jack said, as he piloted party after party through all the rooms but the one which was too sacred for common eyes to see and comment upon.

"Our room," where the bedstead with the medallion was to be set up, and Fanny was to be waiting and watching for him as he came over the hill.

"Alas, alas, for the dreams which come,
And alas for the dreams which go;
Leaving only an aching heart
Crushed with a sudden blow."

CHAPTER VII.—ANNIE'S STORY CONTINUED.

THE 25TH OF NOVEMBER.

THE beginning of the day was bright and fair, with no cloud in the blue sky, and the warmth of the Indian summer filled the hazy air. The close was dark and cold and rainy, and left me a half-crazed woman, scarcely knowing what I did or said, while Jack was as broken and blighted as some tall tree which the storm has torn up by the roots and cast helpless upon the ground. During the last two weeks only short letters had come to Jack from Fanny, while to me she had written at length, telling me how glad she was at the prospect of coming home.

"I reckon too much sight-seeing and dissipation have made me nervous, or bilious, or both," she wrote. "I am not myself at all, either waking or sleeping. In fact I don't sleep. I, who used to drop off the moment my head touched the pillow, now toss for hours without losing consciousness, thinking—thinking—of everything, of the past, the present, and the future, until my brain seems actually broiling. Oh, the future! Don't ever get married, Annie. It's dreadful,—not being quite certain of anything except that you are not half good enough

for the man who loves and trusts you so fully. I wish Jack were not so good. Wish he were more like me. There would then be something like equality. But now, —Annie, did you ever have a horrid nightmare in which you were more awake than asleep, because you could see and hear and feel, but had no power to move, although you knew there was something creeping towards you slowly, surely, with its arms stretched out to enfold you? If you could cry out the spell would be broken, but you can't, and you lie there dead, as it were, waiting for the end you cannot ward off. That is my condition, and will be until I am under our Virginia skies and breathing Virginia air at home with you.

"We have fixed upon Monday the 25th for starting, and as we do not reach Richmond until night you will not see us until Tuesday morning. Shall I be awake then, I wonder; or, will the creeping shadow have me in its embrace? Pray for me, Annie. I need it more than you know; why, I actually feel like asking Phyllis to *rassle in prar* for me, I am in such a state. I wish we were coming sooner, but Miss Errington wants to see her brother off. You know he sails the 23d, and she is going to New York with him on Friday. If I could, I'd start for Lovering to-morrow."

This was a part of Fan's letter. The rest was full of fun and jokes and anticipations of the Thanksgiving dinner she was to eat at home, with some directions to Phyllis how to cook it, and one or two allusions to "the house that Jack built," and which she knew she should like. She closed with: "Your wretched sister, who knows how Paul felt when he wrote to the Romans, chap. 7, verse 15, 'What I would, that I do not; but what I hate, that do I.' If as good a man as Paul whiffeled round like that,

what can you expect of a weak, wicked girl like Fan Hathern?"

This letter troubled me a great deal at first. What did it mean? What could it mean except that as the time drew near Fan shrank from giving up her girlish life and becoming the wife of Jack Fullerton. If this were so I had no patience with her. After a little reflection, however, I concluded that, as she had hinted, too much sightseeing and dissipation had unsettled her mind and liver, making her both bilious and morbid. She would be all right again when once in the quiet, healthful atmosphere of home; and dismissing all anxiety from my mind, I began to make preparations for the Thanksgiving dinner at which Miss Errington and Jack were to be present. In this Phyllis was quite as much interested as myself. For weeks she had had a turkey fattening in a little pen, and every time she fed it she informed it how many days more it had to live before she cut off its head, and how many hours it would probably take to roast it, information which must have been very exhilarating to the bird, if it could have understood it. After her fashion she had cleaned the house, which, borrowing a term which she had heard from Mrs. Hathern and Norah O'Rourke, was in apple-pie order. "Yankee apple pie, too," she said, when telling me how much soap and water she had used. "I only give the kitchen a lick and a promise, as nobody 'll meddle thar but myself," she said.

I expressed my approbation of the cleaning, although I knew that in all human probability she had not raised a window when she washed it, and that if Mrs. Hathern could have walked in to investigate she would have found the dust piled high on the top of the doors where Phyllis had not thought to look. But Mrs. Hathern was where neither moth nor rust corrupt, nor dust gathers on the

golden walls, and Phyllis was mistress of the kitchen. The room which father had occupied had not been slept in since he died, but we arranged it now for Jack, who was to spend the night of Thanksgiving with us. Carl's room was to be given to Miss Errington, and both were in readiness, as was everything else so far as I knew, and I was looking forward anxiously to the coming Tuesday, when our house would be filled with the sound of laughter and happy voices.

I had not been feeling very well and was, besides, so busy with my own affairs that I had not been to The Plateau for a week. I knew Jack was there early and late, with men and women both, pushing matters as fast as possible, and that some of the rooms were settled. Sunday he was out of town, but Monday morning he came to The Elms on his way to The Plateau, figuratively walking upon air, he was so elated. I think I never saw a happier light in any eyes than shone in Jack's, or heard a more joyful ring in any human voice than there was in his as he bade me good morning, and added, "They will soon be on their way. Hurrah!"

Catching up Paul he swung him on his shoulder and carried him two or three times across the wide hall. Then, putting him down and rubbing his hands together, he continued: "I tell you, Annie, the house is a daisy, and so she will think. Four of the rooms are settled,—square hall, dining-room, parlor and *our* room,—and I am coming round in my buggy this afternoon to take you up there. I've had fires in all the grates to dry out any dampness, and everything is perfect. The bedrooms and kitchen and such like are not settled, but they soon will be. I have ordered a range just like yours and expect it every day, and,—do you know *who* is to be the high cock-olorum in the kitchen?"

I could not guess, and he continued: "No darkies for me, but the real article from Yankee land,—Miss Norah O'Rourke! What do you think of that?"

"Norah," I exclaimed; "Norah!"

"Yes, Norah," he replied. "We have had quite a brisk correspondence, Norah and I. She wrote me three or four weeks ago, confidentially, saying Carl was tired of keeping up his big establishment in Boston,—that he was going to rent it and travel. That would throw her out of a home. Next to Boston she liked The Elms, and would come back, provided that *lazy, sozzlin' nigger* wasn't here. I think that's the way she put it. She couldn't abide the blacks, with their shiftlessness, she said, and it wasn't healthy to be with them. Her temper was never the sweetest at its best, and they riled her so, slattin' things round, and *het* her blood so hot that she was apt to break out all over with a kind of rash. I am using her vernacular as far as possible; but to come to the point. If you hadn't Phyllis and would dispose of any colored gentry you might have and wanted her, she would come for a price within your means. She could afford it, as she had recently got a pension of eight dollars a month on account of her brother Mike, who was killed at Gettysburg. I don't believe she was ever really dependent upon him for support, and don't quite understand how she got it. Somebody did some tall swearing. But that's not my matter. If I were to swear a blue streak from here to Washington, I couldn't get a pension. Was on the wrong side of the fence. But to proceed. If you had Phyllis, I was to say nothing. If you hadn't, I was to ask you if you wanted her. You had Phyllis. I said nothing, but remembering to have heard Fan say that she would give more for Norah's little finger than for Phyllis's whole body, so far as order and neat-

ness were concerned, I wrote to Norah, telling her my prospects and asking her how she would like to live with us. 'Tip-top,' she said, and she will be here within a week,—go right into the house and have it all in readiness from stem to stern by Christmas. For once I am in luck, and Fan is coming to-morrow. Do you realize it? To-morrow we shall see her. I can hardly wait. Be ready this afternoon at two sharp. *Au revoir.*"

As he went down the steps two at a time he was singing:

"Never morning dawned so gaily,
Never sky such radiance wore."

Alas, alas! I don't know why I have written these two words, and so anticipated the denouement. I should not have done it had I not been nearing the almost tragedy with which the day, which dawned so gaily, closed.

Chapter VIII.—Annie's Story Continued.

AT THE PLATEAU.

Precisely at two o'clock Jack was at the door, and a few minutes after we were driving rapidly through the town toward The Plateau. Jack had put on his best clothes, as it was a half holiday with him, he said, and he looked very handsome and animated as he talked constantly of Fanny, recalling many incidents of her childhood, and trying to decide just when he made up his mind that she was the one girl in all the world for him.

"I reckon," he said, "it was the first time I went off to the war with my company, and she stood on the horse block throwing kisses to us and waving a red shawl she

had tied to a broom handle. Most of the boys were in love with her, and I think it was her fierce patriotism which kept our courage up, when it might otherwise have cooled. I remember once when we were waiting for a battle to begin, a comrade who stood beside me said, 'What are you thinking of, Jack?' I *was* thinking of Fan, but I replied, 'Nothing; what are you thinking of?' 'Nothing,' was his answer. Just then there came the opening roar of cannon, with the order for our company to move on. Simultaneously we both shouted, 'Hurrah for the South, and Fanny Hathern.' The comrade was poor Tom Allen, who was killed in that battle, and Fan's name was the last upon his lips. I never told her, and never shall. I don't think she cared for him, and I have sometimes been afraid she did not care for me as I do for her. But she will. I shall be so kind to her and try to make her so happy that she must love me after awhile, if she does not at first. I am a sort of country clown, I suppose, and not at all like the high-toned chaps she has been consorting with; but I do believe my heart is in the right place,—that is, my intentions are good."

He was silent a moment,—then turning towards me he continued: "You know the best and the worst of me, if anybody does, and I feel like making you a kind of confessor, or rather confidant, as to how I feel and what I mean to do. Shall I, Annie-mother?"

This name by which Paul called me Jack had taken up since he had been so much at The Elms, saying it suited me, I was such a motherly little woman, with a manner which made everyone confide in and trust me. I liked the name as used by Paul, to whom I was a kind of mother, but I did not quite like to have Jack call me thus. It made me feel so much older than I really was,—older

than he, and a great deal older than Fan, who, Phyllis said, was really my senior by half an hour. I had never given any sign that it was distasteful to me, nor did I now. I merely said, "I am sure you have nothing to confess."

"Well, not exactly that. It is more a confidence as to what I mean to do," he said. "I am all strung up to a pitch of nervousness or exhilaration, and must talk to somebody. This morning when I woke up, and the sun was just rising over the woods, and I felt so light and airy, I asked myself what it was? What had happened, or what was going to happen? Then I remembered that Fanny was coming to-morrow, and that in just a month she would be my wife. I was so thankful and happy that I wanted to do something. You know I'm not very religious, like you and Fan, and I'm not a praying man. I say the prayers in church with the rest of the people, but half the time I'm thinking of something else, and once in a while I go to sleep during the Litany. But I am going to turn over a new leaf, and this morning I went down on my knees and thanked God for Fanny, and asked that I might make her happy, and that she might come safely home to me, and I promised to be a better man and join the church and have family prayers just as your father did, and ask a blessing at the table as mother did. Fanny will like that, I am sure. You don't know how peaceful and quiet I felt after that. Why, it seemed as if I really had been talking to some one who heard and answered me, and the future looks so bright that if I were in one of Phyllis's *pra'r* meetings I believe I should shout. I can readily understand how she works herself up to having the power. I could have it in a little while."

We were going up the hill to The Plateau by this time,

and in Jack's face there was the rapt expression of one who had talked with God as friend talks with friend, and been made the better for it. The sky, which in the morning had been so clear, had gradually been growing grey and overcast, until the sun was hidden from view, and in the west a bank of clouds was rising rapidly and threatening rain. It was growing chilly, too, and as a cold breeze came down the hill, Jack urged his horse on until we came upon the house which looked so pretty and attractive, with all the debris cleared away and the grounds brought up somewhat to their former condition when it was the show place of the town.

"Isn't it lovely?" Jack said, helping me to alight, and then marching me round to look at a view we had both seen a thousand times, but which was always new to him because Fanny's eyes were to see it daily.

He pointed out the tops of the Blue Ridge in the distance, the valley through which the river ran, and the opening in the woods through which the first Federal soldiers who appeared in our midst came marching, years ago, throwing our little town into wild excitement and alarm.

"I heard you were so frightened that you ran to the attic and hid behind the chimney, while Fan armed herself with the poker and went into the street ready to fight, if necessary," he said.

He frequently made comparisons between Fan and myself, and usually to my disadvantage. But I did not care, and now I laughed merrily as I recalled the day when I first heard the Yankees were coming and crawled behind the chimney, half expecting to be shot. I had not then learned that there was very little difference between the conduct of the Yankees and the rebels, and not much to

be feared from either. After the view was exhausted I was taken to see the bit of sodding which had been done where the ground was torn up,—the shrubs which had been planted and the flower beds which had been marked out ready for spring. Noticing at last that I shivered as a gust of wind, damp with coming rain, swept across The Plateau, Jack said, "Why, you are cold, aren't you? I do believe it's going to rain right away. Go into the house where there is a fire. I will be there in a few minutes."

He went whistling to the stable with his horse, while I made my way alone into the house. Passing through the kitchen I came first to the dining-room, with its crimson carpet and curtains, its polished oak table and carved chairs of the same wood, upholstered in dark-green leather, —its handsome sideboard standing in the niche made for it,—its china and glass and fancy cups hanging on hooks,— a fashion beginning to prevail at the north and which Jack had seen in Richmond. There was no grate in this room, but a deep fireplace, ornamented with the brass andirons and fender which had belonged to Jack's mother. On the hearth some pine knots were laid ready for a fire on the morrow, when the real mistress came to see her new home. On one side of the room was a pretty conservatory half full of plants with a hanging basket before two of the windows. Fanny was fond of flowers and Jack had remembered everything.

"Well, what do you think of it? Have I been too extravagant to suit my little economical Annie-mother?" he said, coming in just as I had finished inspecting the room.

I told him it was lovely, but said nothing about extravagance, although I did wonder where all the money came from. I kept on wondering as I went from room to room, stopping next in the square hall with its broad landing,

in an angle of which the tall clock was ticking, with a stained glass window on one side of it and Mrs. Fullerton's portrait on the other. The polished floor in this room was bare with the exception of a few rugs here and there. The deep window seats were cushioned, and a bright fire was burning in the grate. This had been my favorite room from the first, it was so unlike in its construction any room I had then seen, and I was disposed to linger there in the easy chair before the warm fire. But Jack hurried me on to the parlor,—*the great room* he laughingly called it, as he threw open the door. The moquette carpet was down and so thick and soft that my feet nearly went out of sight as I trod upon it. Nothing could have been in better taste than the whole arrangement of the room, from the lace draperies at the windows to the Steinway in the corner. I had not seen it since it was unpacked, and anxious to hear its tone I stepped up to open it when Jack laid his hand on my shoulder and said, "Excuse me, please, but it is a fad of mine that Fanny's fingers must be the first to touch the keys. I've had it tuned and know it is in good shape, and tomorrow afternoon, when I bring Fanny up here, I am going to have her sing and play Home, Sweet Home, and Bonny Doon, and then, little woman, you may drum away on it all you please. Of course the room is not quite finished. It looks a little stiff yet," he continued, glancing around. "It wants some jim-cracks and things, which Fanny will see to. An old shawl of hers, thrown on the back of a chair will change it wonderfully. By George, it begins to rain. I didn't think it would come so soon. I am glad I put Robin in the stable," he exclaimed, as a few drops pattered against the windows. "Let's go now to our room."

This I knew was the *piece de resistance*, the grand reserve kept for the last, and it seemed to me as I followed Jack up the stairs as if he stepped softly, reverently, as we go to look at the dead. But it was not much like a death chamber,—that bright room, with its wide bay window, from which fluted muslin curtains were artistically draped back so as not to obstruct the view. By the centre window a pretty work-table stood, with an inlaid work-box on the top ready for use. On one side of the table a large easy chair, with head and foot rest. On the other side a low rocker, where Fan was to sit and watch for Jack, and later on sew and listen while, in the chair opposite, he talked or read to her, or smoked a little, if she would let him, and he reckoned she would. All this he explained to me, making me try first Fanny's chair to get the view on one side; then his to get the view on the other side, and then calling my attention to the carpet, a light, pretty ingrain, with a delicate pattern of roses.

"I wanted to get Brussels," he said, "but couldn't quite afford it yet. We can put down some matting in the summer. Mrs. Maney of Richmond says that is the correct thing. She helped me a lot. Couldn't have got along without her. What do you think of the furniture?"

I said it was prettier than anything I had ever seen, especially the bedstead, with the medallion and the young girl in the crimson cloak and hood, looking at me with Fanny's eyes and Fanny's smile as I remembered it when she was a child.

"It is very much like Fanny, and looks as if it could speak to us," I said, and Jack, who was regarding it with all his heart in his eyes replied, "She *is* speaking to me, and saying, 'I am coming. I shall be with you to-morrow,' God bless her."

He was almost childish in his happiness, and more like an expectant boy than a man, and I am glad to remember that for a brief space of time he was as perfectly happy as it is often given us to be; glad, too, that in that supreme moment, when all his mighty love was showing in his face and voice, I had no pang of regret or pain because it was another and not myself to whom his love was given. Was there, I wonder, no influence emanating from that room strong enough to reach the girl of whom we both were thinking so intently, and tell her that this was *her hour*,—the last in which she would ever be loved by a man as good and true as Jack Fullerton?

For a moment we stood looking at the picture, and then Jack, who had spied a bit of dust on a table, took his handkerchief from his pocket to wipe it off. In doing so his hand came in contact with a letter for me which he had found in the office and forgotten until this moment.

"I don't know why I was so stupid. If it had been from Fanny I should have remembered it, but it is from New York," he said, as he handed me the rather bulky letter, which was postmarked New York and directed in a handwriting I did not at first recognize.

"Who is writing me from New York?" I said, examining the writing minutely, with a feeling that I had seen it before. Suddenly it came to me, and I exclaimed "Col. Errington. He was to sail Saturday and this is mailed Saturday. What can he have written to me, and so much, too?"

Just then word came up that the new range had arrived, and Mr. Fullerton was wanted to superintend the placing it.

"All right," he said. "I'll be there directly;" then to me, "you will excuse me a moment."

Then he was gone, and I sat looking at the letter and hesitating to break the seal.

Chapter IX.—Annie's Story Continued.

THE LETTER.

There certainly are times in one's life when there comes a presentiment of impending evil, and such a time was that when something told me that the reading of the letter in my lap would not leave me just as it found me. But there was no thought of Fanny in my mind until I opened it, and saw that it contained a note directed to Jack in her handwriting, a little unsteady and crooked, but unmistakably hers. There was a trembling in my hands, a weakness in my wrists and back, and I felt my eyes growing hot and dim, as, putting the note on the table, I resolutely turned to the beginning of the letter and read:

> "Washington, November 21st, 18—. Thursday Evening, after 11 o'clock, with my trunk packed for the journey, and everybody in the house asleep but myself, who feel as if I should never sleep again.

"Dear Annie,

"I am writing to you for the last time as Fanny Hathern. When this reaches you I shall be on the sea,—going to Europe with Col. Errington as his wife!"

If some one had written to me that Fanny was dead, the shock would not have been so great, although different. Consciousness did not forsake me, but for a brief space hearing and seeing did, except that rings of fire

danced before my eyes, and in my ears there was a roaring, far-off noise, as if some one were repeating over and over again "with Col. Errington as his wife." I have been told that when one is near drowning, all the incidents of his life are unrolled before him. I was neither drowning, nor dying, but I seemed to see at a glance all Fan's past as connected with Jack, and her present as connected with Col. Errington, and I scarcely needed to read her letter to know how it had happened. When sight and sound came back, I was conscious of a feeling of intense heat as if I was smothering. I must have air, and dragging myself to the window I opened it, and with the rain beating upon me, although I did not feel it, I read the letter through. It was written half in badinage, half in extenuation, and had in it a ring of pain which told me that there was enough of the old Fan left to torture the new one with remorse when she had time to realize what she had done, and to learn the difference between a heart which beat for her alone, and one which cared for her only as she ministered to its selfishness and pride.

"Don't condemn me utterly," she wrote, "until you read my letter and know how it has come about, if indeed I can tell you. I believe it has been coming ever since that day when Col. Errington came to The Elms with his sister and found us picking grapes. He says it began when he raided our house with his troops and I talked so saucily to him. I could have killed him then in my hatred of everything wearing the Federal uniform. I have at times almost wished I had done so, when I have felt his meshes closing round me until I had no power to resist. Do you remember the old geography we studied years ago, when Mr. Allen from the north was our teacher? There was in it a picture of the so-called Maelstrom on

the coast of Norway, with a ship which had got into the whirl going down, the faces and hands of the ill-fated passengers upturned and imploring help, which could not reach them. That picture had a great fascination for me, especially after Mr. Allen explained it to us so vividly that I felt my hair prickle at the roots, and could see it all so distinctly. The pleasure boat full of giddy young people skirting around the edge of the whirlpool into whose circle they were being gradually drawn;—sailing pleasantly and smoothly round and round, each time swifter than before until at last the line was crossed over which there was no return. Human skill was of no avail. Human aid could not reach them, and they were drawn on and on, nearer and nearer to the roaring mass of angry waters into which they entered at last and went down to the depths below, where, according to his statement the sea floor is strewed with the wrecks of boats and white with human bones. This picture was bad enough, but it was worse still when he drew a moral lesson from it and told us how our little faults, if not overcome would grow until we could not control them and they would drag us on to the great Maelstrom of sin into which we would plunge, head first, I think he said, and go *down*, *down*, *down*,—not to the bottom of the sea,—but to *hell*,—and he emphasized the last word with a blow on the table with his big ruler which made me nearly jump out of my skin. I was scared almost to death, and began to think of all the bad things I had done, putting beech nuts in Charlie's bed, and a little mud-turtle in the pocket of Phyllis's Sunday gown, calling you a fool, and spitting at Jack, when he tried to kiss me. I could not sleep for thinking about it, and finally made Phyllis my confessor and told her of my fear of the Maelstrom of sin.

"'Laws, honey,' she said, stroking my hair, 'don't you worry. What's you got to do any way with Moll Stroon's sin? Let her take keer of it herself. You'se nothin' to do with it. What was it any way? And who was Moll Stroon?'

"I laughed till I cried at her mistake, and called her an old idiot, and didn't worry any more about Moll Stroon's sin. I have since read that the Maelstrom, as we regarded it, is a myth, or at the most a very narrow strait on the coast of Norway through which the sea pours rapidly four times a day with the ebb and flow of the tide,—that when it meets a strong wind from the opposite direction, the water bubbles and boils and seethes like a cauldron, but nothing is ever drawn into it except foolish whales who are too big to turn round and go back. Why have I dwelt so long on this Maelstrom? I don't know, unless it is to show you how, ever since I left home, I have been hanging on the verge of a moral whirlpool, sliding over one circular wave after another until I grew dizzy and have finally tumbled in. To use a slang phrase, 'that is about the size of it.' Col. Errington says that he never forgot me for a day after the first time he saw me, and I stood up so bravely and told him what I thought of him; that when he saw me the second time on the ladder with grape stains on my face and I as unconcerned about my personal appearance as if I had been a queen and he my subject, he registered a vow that if possible he would make me his wife. You know he did write, offering me his hand. I never answered his letter, and that cooled his ardor, until he came the third time and found us at The Plateau. The knowledge that I was engaged to Jack dampened him a little, but he did not despair, and when he succeeded in getting me to Washington

and under his influence he felt tolerably sure of success, seeing as he did how fond I was of everything which riches can give. He has never said a word against Jack. That would have defeated his plan, but in a thousand ways I cannot describe he has made me feel how wholly unfitted I am to be the wife of a poor man, and how eminently fitted to shine in a society different from anything in Lovering. He has made me feel, too, that Jack is countrified and that after a while I should grow away from him and perhaps be ashamed of him,—a state of things which would make me wretched. I know there is more real goodness in Jack's little finger than in the Colonel's whole body and told him so. He only laughed and said he had no doubt of it, but he believed I would be happier with his whole body bad as it was than with Jack's good little finger. If he has never said anything derogatory of Jack he has of Lovering, which seen with his eyes and my recent experience of something better seems to me the dullest place on earth, and one in which I couldn't possibly live again. You don't know anything about it Annie; you who have never been anywhere except to Boston. Then it was a funeral at which you could not be very gay. You only saw the usual sights of the city with Carl. You know nothing of grand hotels, with suites of rooms and obsequious waiters, who come at your nod, because you belong to the Errington party,—of fine turnouts with coachmen and footmen in livery, and people looking admiringly after you;—of elegant houses, such as there are in New York and Washington, and especially Col. Errington's, where everything is the most expensive kind, with hosts of servants to do your bidding;—of splendid dresses and jewels such as ladies wear to dinners and receptions; boxes at the opera,

and all the pleasant gossip, a knowledge of these things brings to those who are in the swim. This is society, and I like it and it has been offered me a good many times in return for myself, and a good many times I have refused it, but when I thought the matter settled the Colonel has changed his base of operations and commenced the siege again. His love-making has never been open and impetuous like Jack's, but done persistently and in that delicate, persuasive way so hard to resist. Neither Miss Errington nor Katie have a suspicion of it. Indeed, his sister expects to go with him to New York to-morrow and see him off on Saturday, and she has asked Katy and me to accompany her. I declined, but I believe Katy intends to go. I hardly think she will, and I dread the scene in the morning when they must know the truth.

"I did not decide until this afternoon. I drove with the Colonel this morning far out into the country. We were gone two or three hours, and he improved his opportunity, urging every possible reason why I should not marry Jack and should marry him. In Lovering I would be a nonentity, darning my husband's socks and looking after the kitchen to see things were not wasted. In Washington I would be a leader in society, quoted and admired, with every wish gratified, and the finest establishment in the city. He would build a house for me, he said, much handsomer than the one he now occupies, and he took me around to see the site on one of the pleasantest and most fashionable avenues. He would have two or three plans sent to us for approval in Europe, and it could be commenced at once. As soon as we had the measurements of the rooms I could, if I liked, order the carpets and rugs, together with the furniture. There were to be draperies from Paris, pictures and statuary from Rome

and Florence, china and linen from Dresden and England, and bric-a-brac from everywhere. There was to be a cottage at Newport in the summer,—trips to Florida in the winter, where, if I liked, he would build a pretty villa near some one of the many lakes which abound in the southern part of the state. He knows a spot which will just suit me in Orange County. I think it was this villa, which he described so vividly, with its broad piazza,—vine covered and cool,—its palms and magnolias and orange trees and roses, and fanciful rowboat on the lake, which moved me the most. I can have you and Paul there. The place will suit you better than the gayeties of Washington, or Newport, and in imagination I have already filled the wide piazza of Palmetto Villa with chairs and stools, and a little round table for books or work, or afternoon tea, and I have put Paul into a hammock and you into an easy chair, and have with you looked across the road to Lake Hathern sparkling in the sunlight, and have inhaled the perfume of orange blossoms and the delicious Florida air, freighted with the odor of many flowers. And by and by carriages come out from Orlando, a pretty town close by, with people to call upon us, English and Americans, and our grounds are bright with the flutter of gay dresses, and the house is filled with the chatter of small talk,—admiration of the place, and implied compliments of the beautiful hostess,—that is I, who carries herself like a duchess, and says to herself, 'This is life; I did well not to refuse it.' Isn't that a charming picture? I thought so and began to waver.

"On our return to the house the Colonel found a telegram from the White Star office, asking if he still wished them to reserve the staterooms he had looked at when in the city last week. If so, he must let them know at once,

as another party wanted them. He had been so sure that I would go with him, he said, that he had partially engaged the rooms, and now I must decide.

"'Give me an hour,' I said, and after my lunch I went directly to my room, pleading a headache, which would keep me from going out with Miss Errington and Katy, who were to make some purchases for Lovering. I locked the door, took off my dress, put on a wrapper, let down my hair, unbuttoned my boots, looked in the glass, and then sat down to weigh the pro's and con's of the situation.

"Do you remember that queer little thing which I once recited at school, 'The Philosopher's Scales,' which were not made to weigh sugar and tea, but qualities, feelings, thoughts and sense. The first thing he tried, we are told, was the head of Voltaire pitted against the prayer of the penitent thief, with the result that the head flew up and the prayer down. Then

> 'A lord and a lady went up at full sail,
> When a bee chanced to light in the opposite scale.'

Then at last,

> 'The whole world was bowled in at the grate,
> With the soul of a beggar to serve for a weight,
> When the scale with the soul in't so mightily fell,
> That it jerked the philosopher out of his cell!'

"All this recurred to me so vividly this afternoon and keeps repeating itself over and over in my brain as I sit writing this to you. I am a little girl again in the old school-house at Lovering. It is Wednesday afternoon, and outside under the trees several horses are tied, with here and there a negro in attendance. Inside, the western sun comes through the windows and lies in great splashes of light on the floor. On his little perch of a platform Mr. Allen, of Maelstrom notoriety, sits calling

the names of those who are to recite or declaim, his voice sounding like thunder when he says 'Fanny Hathern: The Philosopher's Scales.' In her red merino gown and white apron *Fanny Hathern* walks from her seat to the platform, the distance seeming a mile, and her heart thumping like a trip-hammer, as she tries to remember whether it was the *prayer* of Voltaire and the *skull* of the thief, or *vice versa*. There is company in school that afternoon, the Trustees, of whom the girl's father is one, and hence her anxiety to acquit herself creditably with her scales. You are there and Charlie, and Jack is in the corner just where the little girl can see him, as she curtsies straight down and begins, with her eyes fixed on him, for she knows his lips will try to form the words if she wavers. He has helped her learn the piece and heard her rehearse it many times, telling her how to manage her voice, for Jack is a natural orator. The little girl acquits herself very creditably and goes back to her seat, passing so near to Jack that she hears distinctly his whispered words, 'You did it tip-top.'

"Dear old Jack, who always thought I did everything 'tip-top,' and who brought me the biggest apples he could find in the bin, who put so many sugar hearts and raisins into my desk, and carried me in his arms across the puddles of water, when I was afraid of spoiling my new shoes. What will he think of me now, I wonder? Believe me, Annie, my face is wet with tears as I recall those far-off days and think of Jack, who would never serve me as I am serving him. It is raining heavily to-night and the wind howls at my window with a sound in it like a human sob or moan,—like Jack's voice calling to me through the storm, and saying it is not too late to draw back. There it comes again, the moan,—making me

creep all over, there is something so uncanny in the sound at this hour of the night. It *is not* too late to draw back, and I'll do it, too. If the Colonel is still up,—if there is a light over or under his door, I will knock and tell him I have changed my mind, that I cannot break Jack's heart—I have been out into the hall and the whole length of it, treading very cautiously lest Miss Errington or Katy should hear me. There was no light over or under the Colonel's door. He was fast asleep, snoring horribly at intervals, and it was these snores which I mistook for Jack's moaning in the wind. I cannot draw back. It is too late. I believe I am half crazed and don't know what I am writing, or have written. I remember I had reached the ' Philosopher's Scales ' when I digressed so widely, so I will return to that point and the time this afternoon when I sat down to weigh the pro's and con's,—the *pro's* for my marrying the Colonel, and the *con's* against it. Into the *con* I put Jack, young, handsome, true as steel, good every way, with no fault whatever except that he is poor, knows but little of fashionable society and cares less, wears old-fashioned coats and slouch hats, with his trousers in his boots when the roads are muddy. That was Jack, and of course the *con* went down with a whack as there was nothing to balance it. Then I took the Colonel, years older than I am, growing bald on the top of his head and a little deaf in one ear, with some grey in his hair and whiskers, and no power to thrill or quicken my pulse when he touches my hand, as Jack has. Good habits, distinguished looking, remarkably well preserved, polished manners, perfect knowledge of the world and every shade of etiquette, and always habited in the last style from his collar to his boots. That was the Colonel, and I put him into the *pro* scale,

which was up in the air and swung and tetered, but did not make Jack, who was down, budge an inch. The *con* was ahead, and I was glad, but I meant to be fair, and took up Lovering next, asking what besides Jack and you and Paul it had to offer me in exchange for the world of society I liked so much. Two or three picnics in the summer when the people eat their lunch on the ground in the woods, with bugs and ants crawling over them, and pretend they like it. A few tea parties, where the talk is mostly of the good times before the war and the bad times since. Possibly a circus. (By the way, I hear Buffalo Bill is going to Richmond next spring. If he does, sell your best bonnet and go and see him and take Paul.) So much for summer dissipation. In the winter it is a little better. A singing school, amateur theatricals for the churches, or Y. M. C. A.'s, or W. C. T. U.'s, of which half the people approve and the other half disapprove. Occasionally a lecture and concert and travelling play actors, who are second class, or they would not come to Lovering. The negro revival, which is lively, and the Sewing Society or Guild once a month, with tea, one kind of cake, no napkins, and gossip. As Mrs. Jack Fullerton I might in time become President of the Guild and walk miles to find a place for it to meet; that would perhaps be some compensation for the dullness of the place, and relieve the ennui of living alone at The Plateau, with you at the other end of the town. Think how bored I should be after the novelty of counting my silver and dishes had worn off. There would be nothing left me to do but to hob-a-nob with the cook and watch for Jack, who would in time be as bored as I. That is Lovering life and I put it in the scale with Jack, expecting that, like the lord and the lady, he would go up at full

sail. He only stirred a very little and looked at me so steadfastly with his honest, trusting eyes, that I still hoped he would win.

"I must, however, be fair to the Colonel, and I piled on top of him the trip to Europe, jewels and dresses and travel and a French maid. The new house and grounds in Washington, the cottage at Newport, Palmetto Villa in Florida, a box at the opera, horses and carriages, and all the money I want to spend, with nothing to do except to enjoy it. This settled the matter and the *pro's* went down so fast and the *con* went up so swiftly, that Jack and Lovering were thrown out and vanished entirely. The die was cast, and without a moment's hesitation I made myself presentable and went to the library, where I found the Colonel, calm and cool and polishing his thumb nail with one of those little brushes which come for that purpose. He has a full set. Rather effeminate, I think. I did not stop a minute lest my courage should fail, for something was tugging at my heart, which felt like a lump of ice.

"'I am going with you to Europe,' I said, the words half choking me.

"He stopped polishing his thumb nail, and drawing me to him—— Well, no matter what he did, except that it was all very dignified and circumspect, and not at all like Jack, who nearly ate me up when I promised to marry him. Poor Jack! I have said that to myself many times since my interview with the Colonel, which did not last long. I was in a hurry to get away from him, his hands were so cold and clammy, not at all like Jack's. But then he is a man of an entirely different temperament, and may be just as kind. He was very glad for my decision, he said, and he trusted I would never regret it; he should certainly try to make me happy. I didn't tell him

I was regretting it even then. Disengaging myself from him I went to my room and cried as if my heart would break. I heard him go out and knew that in a few moments there would flash across the electric wires to the White Star office in New York the message 'Keep the staterooms, Nos.— and — for me. G. Errington.' The deed was done, and when about five o'clock Miss Errington and Katy came in from their shopping I was lying on the couch in my room with a headache which was not feigned. Katy was full of purchases made for you and Paul and Phyllis and Jack, while Miss Errington had been busy collecting a few things for her brother's comfort on the sea. You know she was intending to go with him to New York and take Katy with her, and my conscience smote me as I heard her talking about it and planning that I should not be lonely during her absence. The Colonel told me to have my trunk packed to-night, taking as little as possible. I was to say nothing to anyone, but leave it for him to tell his sister in the morning before I came down to breakfast. Ah me, how I dread the scorn in her eyes and the surprise in Katy's when they know all. Miss Errington is a splendid woman; rather peculiar in some respects and nearly as determined as her brother when once her mind is made up. She has been most kind and generous to me and seems to like me very much. But Katy is her favorite. She has spoken of taking her abroad. If she is still of this mind, don't oppose it, although it will leave you very lonely. Let Katy see the world. She is exceedingly beautiful, with a face and voice like an angel. She ought to make a brilliant match, and with Miss Errington to chaperone her, I think she will, and forget her foolishness about the stage. There is no one in Lovering for her, but with Miss Errington her

chances are many. I suspect she has a fancy for Carl, but that will never amount to anything. He scatters too much. I hear of him here and there and everywhere, sipping sweets from many flowers and caring particularly for none.

"It is one o'clock in the morning. I have still my note to write to Jack, a harder task than writing to you, so I will leave this letter and finish it in New York after the deed is done and I can tell you of the manner with which the news was received by Miss Errington and Katy.

"Saturday, Nov. 23d, 5th Avenue Hotel,
10 o'clock in the morning.

"DEAR ANNIE.

"I have on my traveling gown and jacket,—the tailor-made one, which is very becoming, with gilt buttons and braid. On the table is a fur lined cloak, with shawls and wraps enough to have warmed even Harry Gill, if anything could have thawed that chattering wretch. I feel some like him, for my hands and feet are icy cold. But I must finish my letter commenced in Washington and tell you of the row we had when it was known that I was to marry the Colonel. He told his sister in the library before breakfast, when she came in ready for the journey she expected to take. At first she refused to believe it, and I was sent for to confirm the news. I went with my knees shaking under me and in a condition more like Harry Gill than ever. She was white to her lips, and her eyes burned like coals of fire as she demanded if what she had heard was true.

"'Answer her, Fanny. She does not believe me,' the Colonel said.

"I was never afraid to speak before, but something in Miss Errington's manner and attitude cowed me completely and I hesitated before stammering out that it was true, and I was going to marry her brother.

"'If you will excuse me I will leave you to settle it

between yourselves, as I have something to see to. But don't be long, there is not much time to lose,' the Colonel said, in his usual suave manner.

"Bowing politely he disappeared, while his sister stood clutching the back of a chair, tall and erect and confronting me like some dreadful Nemesis. I knew I deserved the worst that she could say or think of me, and cowered before her while she regarded me with unutterable disdain.

"'Miss Hathern,' she began, 'If there were no reason why it should not be, I might be glad to receive you as my brother's wife, but to break your engagement with another man so suddenly is monstrous. Have you weighed the subject well?'

"I thought of the Scales, but knew she would not understand that, or the Maelstrom either. She was matter of fact and I must answer her in the same spirit. As well as I could I tried to explain till she had a tolerably fair insight as to the real motives which actuated me.

"'I see,' she said, sarcastically. 'Because the man is poor you are throwing him over and selling yourself for money and freedom. I pity you when you waken to know what you have done. My brother is dear to me, of course, but I know him, and he will not be a pleasant man for a woman of your spirit to live with. Everything in his power must bend to his will or break. He may not beat you, although he does his horses and dogs, when they disobey, but he will bend you until you have no free will of your own, and the time will come when you will long with inexpressible longing for the love and tenderness and consideration of the man you are discarding.'

"At this moment Katy came rushing in. She had heard the news from the Colonel, and throwing her arms around my neck sobbed hysterically, begging me to give it up for all our sakes,—Jack's, your's, Paul's, Phyllis's, father's and Charlie's, and I think she mentioned The Boy, but am not sure. It was a sin to Jack, she said, and a disgrace to our family, and would make me a by-word with every decent person in Lovering.

"Between Katy's tears and Miss Errington's scorn I

was so limp and crushed that I might have given it up if the Colonel had not come to my rescue.

"'There has been enough of this,' he said, sternly, 'come to breakfast, time is passing.'

"He put his arm around me and led me to the dining-room, where we breakfasted alone. Katy was upstairs crying and Miss Errington was ordering her valise to be taken to her room, as she would not need it now. Her brother, who had recovered his composure and was as quiet and calm and cool as ever, suggested that she still go with us and take Katy. But she declined. Katy, I think, wished to go, and clung to me at parting in a way which wholly upset me.

"'Remember Jack,' she whispered to me, 'have pity on him and give it up. It is not too late, and will not be till the very last.'

"Was there ever a girl more wretched on her wedding day than I was, I wonder? Of the journey to New York I can recall very little, except that the Colonel was unremitting in his care for my comfort, and that once when he spread his rug across my lap I smiled on him and said 'You are very kind.' Aside from that I hardly spoke, but sat leaning back in my chair with my eyes closed, sometimes asleep, for I was perfectly exhausted, and sometimes thinking, always the same thought, 'It is not too late yet.' The words were whispered into my ears continually by something which seemed to be sitting on my shoulder and croaking, until I was nearly mad. There was, however, a comfort in knowing that I could still draw back, and I counted how many hours probation were left me before it would be too late. Jack will hardly suffer more than I did during that rapid journey, when to everything else, was added homesickness for The Elms, and you and the dear old life I was throwing away. It was a kind of nightmare, I think, and by the time our train was nearing Jersey City I had made up my mind to jump from the car the moment we stopped and lose myself in the crowd; in short, to run away! The bustle and excitement at the station and the hurrying to the boat revived me. The

thing on my shoulder stopped its croaking, and the Colonel had my arm in his and held my hand tightly as if he divined my thoughts. So the newspapers lost an exciting paragraph headed 'Strange disappearance of a bride on her wedding day.'

"When we reached the hotel and were ushered into the suite of rooms the Colonel had ordered for us I felt better, and when Mr. and Mrs. Darcy, friends of the Colonel, who board at the hotel and whom I had met when I stopped there with Miss Errington, came in to see me and made much of me as the future Mrs. Errington, I was quite myself, and all through dinner, which they took with us and which was served in our private parlor, I was in high spirits, too high, I fear, as I saw them look curiously at me once or twice, as if wondering whether I were quite sane. After dinner the three conferred in low tones, while I stood with my back to them looking into the busy street below and vaguely wondering if it would break one's neck to jump from the second story to the sidewalk, and if one could so manage as not to land on the head of some pedestrian. I heard the Colonel say, 'As soon as possible now. I have dispatched a messenger boy.' I knew what he meant and grew hot and cold again in a minute, while the creature on my shoulder began its warning cry, 'Not too late yet,' and pressed so close to my ears that I fancied it touched my hair with its wings. In the car I had thought of Poe's raven, but now I said to myself, 'It is a bat.' I have a mortal terror of bats and put up my hand to brush it away. But it stayed and clamored louder and louder, while I kept trying to brush it off, until Mrs. Darcy came to me and said, 'There is a lock of hair loose on your neck. I think that is what annoys you. Let me fix it.'

"She took out a hairpin and fastened the refractory lock, while I wondered if she would see the thing on my shoulder. She didn't, and I began to fear I was losing my mind, and made a great effort to pull myself together. There was a knock at the door and the Rev. Mr. Gillson came in, book in hand, ready for business. I was pre-

sented to him, and the Colonel explained as a reason for this seemingly sudden marriage that I could not decide to brave the ocean in the winter until the night before. The clergyman bowed and looked very searchingly at me as I stood in the corner with a face white as a corpse. If Mr. and Mrs. Darcy had not been his parishioners he might have questioned me, thinking me an unwilling bride. But they were my vouchers and Col. Errington was well known to him by reputation. It was all right and the ceremony began, while the bat, if bat it were, shrieked and fluttered and flapped, until it seemed to me they must all hear it. But when the Colonel took the ring, it gave one despairing cry, 'Too late, too late!' and flew away, leaving me calm and quiet, with a strange hallucination of the brain. It was Jack putting the ring on my finger, —Jack's voice, which said, 'With this ring I thee wed, with all my worldly goods I thee endow.' I smiled as I thought how few were his worldly goods, compared to what might have been mine, but I was glad that the night-mare was over, the horrid dream passed, and I awake again in the old spare room at home with Jack at my side. I was very much awake when Mr. and Mrs. Darcy kissed me and called me 'Mrs. Errington,' while somebody, who was not Jack, kissed me and called me his wife. The room at The Elms resolved itself into the parlor at the hotel, and Jack was lost to me forever by my own act, and I felt like a block of stone as I received the congratulations of the clergyman and felt that the Colonel's eyes were upon me.

"I have read somewhere that in the great crises of one's life the most ridiculous thoughts will sometimes intrude, and there came to me a saying I have heard father use so often when I was fretting over some disaster, 'Never cry for spilled milk!' It helped me wonderfully. I had spilled all mine,—a brimming pail, and drowned my heart in doing it. I could never undo what I had done, but I could make the best of it, and I mean to. I have written you thus fully because I wanted you to know that I am not altogether callous, and that I did struggle against my

fate. A stronger will than mine conquered me. I am Col. Errington's wife and shall be faithful to him, and however my heart may ache for the might have been, no one, not even you, shall know it. My husband——. I have written the word, and feel better,—is very kind and generous. He knows I did not marry him for love, and I think he means me to have my price,—*all the money I want.* His wedding present is $10,000, to do with as I please. Half of it I shall send to you, as I know how low our finances are. He does not object. He thought I would do it, he said, and has made arrangements to send it before we sail. He has bought me a lovely fur cloak for the voyage, and given me two one hundred dollar bills for pin money. More than I ever had in all my life. One of the bills I am sending to Jack in payment for what he sent me on the pretense of buying Black Beauty. I bought the tailor-made gown with it, my wedding gown, which I am wearing now, and which I can not bear to think was bought with Jack's money. Make him take it. Tell him it is to buy Black Beauty back, and don't let him hate me. Tell him I did love him dearly and am afraid I do now when to do so is a sin. I am another man's wife, and my husband has come in and says I have but little more time, as he wishes to get settled in our staterooms before the ship sails. I wonder if I shall throw myself into the sea. Perhaps. If you hear of an 'accidental drowning of the lovely young bride of the Hon. George W. Errington,' —that's the way they will word it,—you will know it was not accidental, but keep it to yourself.

"I have not time to read what I have written. If I had I probably should not send it. I think I have told you everything in a wild, disconnected and perhaps contradictory way, and I have felt disconnected and wild as I told it. You may show this letter to Miss Errington, who still intends going to The Elms with Katy. Perhaps she will feel less hard towards me. You may also tell Jack some things that are in it and which I could not write to him. Oh, Jack, oh Annie! Good-bye, Good-bye! I put my arms around your necks and kiss you both. God bless

you. Write to me and tell me about Jack. The Colonel will cable from Queenstown. He is getting impatient and to save time has directed the envelope for me. Good-bye, again.

"FANNY HATHERN ERRINGTON. Ah me!"

CHAPTER X.—ANNIE'S STORY CONTINUED.

THE EFFECT.

FANNY'S handwriting was never very legible, and now it was worse than usual, while her letter was so long and my eyes so blurred with tears that it took me a long time to read it, and after it was read I leaned back in my chair shaking from head to foot, with a sense of loss and shame and pity for us all who must bear the disgrace, for such I felt Fan's conduct to be. I pitied her, but not as I did Jack, who was so full of anticipations of the morrow and so little prepared for the blow awaiting him. I heard him come whistling up the stairs, two at a time, and involuntarily put up my hands to ward him off,—to keep him a little longer from what I knew would be worse than death.

"Hallo!" he said, as he came in. "I didn't expect to be gone so long, but those stupid men didn't seem to understand the range at all, and I'll be hanged if I know much more than they do. Mother always used a fireplace, you know. But I reckon we have got it into shipshape. If not, Norah can fix it when she comes. Why, Annie, Annie!" he exclaimed suddenly, struck by my attitude and the expression of my face, "Are you ill? What has happened? You are as white as a ghost, and the rain beating in upon you, too."

He shut the window and continued, as the letter in my lap rustled a little. "You have had bad news. Is it Carl? Is he ill? Is he dead?"

I shook my head, and he went on: "What is it then? What has happened?"

As he stepped back his eye fell upon the note directed to him, which lay upon the table. He recognized his name, and the handwriting, and catching it up, he said, "From Fanny; how did it get here? Did it come in that letter from New York, which you said was from Col. Errington?"

I nodded and managed to gasp, "Oh Jack, oh Jack! How will you bear it!"

"Bear what?" he asked. "Tell me; the suspense is torture to me. Has anything happened to Fanny? She isn't dead or she could not write to me."

Summoning all my strength, I answered. "No, Jack, Fanny is not dead. It is worse than that. She is married to Col. Errington and gone with him to Europe."

I have heard Jack tell with a shudder of men at his side in battle dropping instantly when a ball struck them, but surely no man in the fiercest battle which ever raged could have fallen more suddenly than Jack did into the chair nearest to him, where he sat huddled together like an old man, his mouth open and his glazed eyes looking at me in dumb despair.

"N-n-no, Annie," he began at last, with quivering lips and chin and in a voice I would never have known as his. "N-n-no, Annie. Say it again. I didn't hear you right. There's a roaring in my ears. Fanny—isn't—married! My—Fanny, who was to have this room, and watch for me. N-n-no, Annie, N-no."

There was a huskiness in his voice which frightened me,

and a moan like one in mortal pain, which made me forget myself in my desire to comfort him.

"Don't Jack," I said, going up to him and rubbing his cold hands and face, which was not pale but of a greenish hue. "Don't take it so hard. She is my sister, but if she were ten times that I should say she is not worth the anguish you are enduring. She has sold herself for money. She was married Friday evening in New York and sailed in the Celtic Saturday afternoon. She had a hard struggle before she decided to do what she has done. I think she loves you still."

As I talked the greenish hue left his face and was succeeded by a deathly pallor, as, reaching out his hand, he said, "Give me her letter."

"Yours, you mean," I said, offering him the note addressed to him.

"No,—yours. I have a right to know all she can say," he answered, and his voice was not like the Jack of an hour ago. There was a ring in it like one who would be obeyed. "I don't care what she has written to *me;* to *you* she would tell the truth. Give me her letter," he continued.

I gave it to him and then watched him as he read it rapidly in the waning light of that dreary November afternoon, with the rain beating against the windows, and the wind which was beginning to rise howling around the house, as Fanny said it howled the night she wrote the letter. It was curious to watch the different expressions of Jack's face as his eyes went over the pages. Sometimes his breath came heavily, his teeth shut tightly together and there were great ridges in his forehead between his eyes. Again his face softened and his lips quivered and I knew he was reading the parts where Fan spoke of

him. I knew, too, when he reached the Scales and the weighing process by the throwing up of his head and the flaring of his nostrils like one under strong excitement. Once he brought his hand down heavily upon the arm of his chair, and if I had ever heard him swear I should have suspected that something like an oath escaped him. Then he read on until he came to the marriage scene in the hotel, when his whole aspect changed. The hardness was gone and he shook like one in a chill, although he asked me to open the window again, saying he could not breathe.

"Oh, Fanny, Fanny, how could you do this to me, who loved and trusted you so!" he said, and letting the letter drop to the floor and covering his face with his hands he rocked to and fro and cried as I had never seen any one cry before, and pray I never may again. And yet he shed no tears, but sobbed and moaned so pitifully that I went to him again and laying my arm across his shoulder drew his hot head down upon it as I would if he had been my brother.

There was then no thought of the love I had borne him so long; it was only intense pity for the man whose heart I knew was breaking, and whom I tried to comfort.

"Don't, Jack; don't," I said, brushing back his hair, which was wet with the great drops of sweat which stood under it and upon his forehead. "I wish I could comfort you. Oh, I wish I could, but only God can do that."

Then he started, and looking at me fiercely exclaimed, "Don't speak to me of God. I have lost all faith in everything. Didn't I trust Him, and wasn't my heart so full of gratitude this morning for all the good I thought He had given me! And didn't I make resolutions for a better life? Tell me that. And what has come of it? When I was on my knees thanking Him for Fanny and asking that I might

be worthy, she was another man's wife, and He gave me no sign, but let me go on in my fool's paradise. How could God do that? How could Fanny do it? Oh, Fanny, Fanny! If you were lying dead here in what was to have been our bridal chamber it would be happiness compared to this. Don't speak to me, Annie. Don't touch me," and he pushed me from him. "It seems to bring Fanny near to me, and I can't bear it now, when my love for her is dying so hard. Shut the window, please. I am shivering again."

I closed the window and then stood looking at him writhing in pain, as if he were indeed enduring the throes of death. It was growing late and I roused him at last, pointing to the darkness outside and telling him that Paul and Phyllis would be waiting anxiously for us.

"Can you get your horse, or shall I?" I asked.

"I'll go," he said, getting up and tottering as if he were an old man.

On the table where he had lain it without reading was Fanny's note to him, and I put it in my purse with the bill which had been in my letter and which I had not given him. I heard the buggy at the door, and going out got in beside him and we started down the hill. It was raining fast and had grown very dark. If the horse had not been perfectly gentle and known every turn of the road, we might have met with some disaster, for the reins hung loosely in Jack's hands and he seemed to notice nothing. Once we met a carriage which passed so close to us that the wheels grazed each other, but Jack paid no attention. Then I took the lines from him and drove myself, while he sat with his head bent so low that his chin must have rested upon his chest. Once I spoke to him, but he did not answer, and when we reached the town I called to a

boy on the walk bidding him to go for a physician and tell him to come at once to The Elms, adding that Mr. Fullerton had been taken suddenly ill. I had no intention of having Jack in his present condition go to his boarding-house that night. He would be better at The Elms, and after speaking to the boy I drove rapidly home. There was a bright light in the dining-room and Paul's face was pressed against the window pane watching for me. At the sound of wheels Phyllis hurried to the door, peering out into the darkness and shading her eyes with her hand.

"For de Lord's sake, Miss Annie and Mas'r Jack," she began. "Whar has you been, and what has happened you? De muffins is all fell flat, an' de coffee biled till it's spiled."

"Sh-sh," I said warningly. "Bring a light, and come and help me; Mr. Fullerton is ill,—very ill, I am afraid."

She had a candle at the door in a minute and was at my side, as I sprang to the ground after giving Jack a vigorous shake which roused him a little.

"Yes. Where are we? At home? All right. I'll see you to-morrow before she comes," he said, putting out his hand and feeling for the lines.

"Jack, you are to stay at The Elms with me," I said, wondering how I was to make him get out if he were disposed not to do so.

Just then I heard the tramp of horses' feet in the avenue and the doctor came riding up rapidly. He was just starting to visit a patient in the country when he received my message and came at once to know what had happened. Between him and Phyllis Jack was gotten into the house, his weakness and silence so alarming that I was relieved when, as he felt the warmth of the dining-room, he stretched his hands toward the light-wood fire and said, "Ah-h,

that feels good I think I must have taken cold. I am so chilly. I wish somebody would cover up Robin," referring to his horse, of which he was very fond. Sinking into the chair which Phyllis drew close to the hearth, he gave a long sigh, leaned his head back and closed his eyes, while the doctor looked curiously at him and then at me.

"He is in a high fever," he said, "although he seems so cold. How did the attack come on and what caused it?"

I could not explain then, and answered evasively. "He must stay here to-night, in father's room, and the sooner you get him in there the better," I said, telling Phyllis to kindle a fire and get the bed ready. I knew the condition of things better than the doctor, who, for a time, acted under my orders. At first Jack resisted, saying he must go home as his landlady would not like it if he kept supper waiting. Then he began to talk of Scales and Maelstroms, and Fanny, who was coming to-morrow. We got him quiet at last and into bed where he lay perfectly still, with his hands folded, his eyes closed and his face white as the pillow it rested upon.

"I can't make it out," the doctor said. "It is not often a young and strong man like him comes down so suddenly and so fast. Why, there is no more life in him than in a piece of paper. Looks to me as if he had received some great mental shock. Can't account for it in any other way."

Reflecting that on the morrow when Miss Errington and Katy came without Fanny the truth must be told, I replied, "He has had a shock. You know he was to have been married on Christmas day."

The doctor nodded, and I went on slowly, with a feeling that my tongue was very thick.

"This evening I had a letter from Fanny, who has married Col. Errington and gone to Europe with him."

The doctor dropped into the chair nearest him almost as quickly as Jack had dropped when I told the news to him. But he did not speak, for Fanny was my sister and he would not say what was in his mind. I, however, relieved him from all embarrassment by saying, "It has quite unnerved me. It came like a thunderclap. I had no suspicion of it. I think it a cruel, wicked act."

"Yes, yes, all of that," he answered, "and may have serious results. There are symptoms about Mr. Fullerton which I do not like. He is strong in everything pertaining to his manhood, but in his nature gentle and tender and trustful as a woman. The blow has struck him hard. See that he has his medicine regularly. I will be here early in the morning. Now, I must go, as I have a patient waiting for me three miles in the country."

He went out and I followed him, meeting in the hall with Phyllis, who was eager in her inquiries for Mas'r Jack and what had "done took him so suddently." I told her the truth, and if a negro can turn pale she certainly did. Throwing up her hands and dropping the cup of milk she was taking to Paul, who was clamoring for his supper, she staggered against the door, exclaiming, "Lor' a 'mighty! What for has Miss Fanny gone done dat ar mean trick to Mas'r Jack, an' a disgracin' de whole of us. No weddin,' —no nothin',—an' sich gossip in de town. Gone to Europe has she in de big ship?" I nodded and she continued, "May de Lord s—." She was going to say "sink de ship," but changed her mind and added, "may he make her so sick she'll heave up Jonah an' that Cunnel too. I 'members him well fust time he was here, orderin' dem soldiers roun' as if dey was dirt.

Jess so he'll done order Miss Fanny, and sarve her right."

A moan from Jack and an imperative call from Paul brought the interview to an end, and while Phyllis went to the one I hastened to the other, who was talking rather wildly. This did not greatly surprise me as I remembered having heard his mother say that whenever anything ailed him, if it were only the earache, to which as a boy he was subject, it made him delirious. It was more than earache now, and I tried to quiet him as he talked disconnectedly of several things, but mostly of Fanny and the house on The Plateau, and *our room*, wondering if she would like it, and the medallion on the bedstead which looked so much like her.

"I love her so! I love her so! How can I give her up!" he suddenly exclaimed, throwing his arms down with great force upon the spread, while the perspiration rolled down his face, and his eyes glared at me questioningly and then wandered swiftly around the room.

He wanted to go home, he said; this was no place for him, and Fanny coming to-morrow. Once he tried to get up, but I kept him back, telling him to wait till to-morrow, when I hoped he would be better.

"What little dark-faced woman are you, I'd like to know, trying to boss me?" he said, looking curiously at me, as I kept my arm across his chest. "You can't hold a candle to Fanny. Where is she? You go away and send her here."

I knew he was not conscious of what he was saying, but in my nervous condition his words hurt me, and my voice shook as I replied, "Fanny has not come yet. You didn't expect her till to-morrow. I am Annie. Don't you know me Jack?"

Something in my voice arrested his attention, and look-

ing fixedly at me he said, "You want to cry, don't you? Put your head down here and have it out." With one hand he drew my head down upon his other hand and kept it there, while I cried like a child. It was his part to comfort me now, and he tried to do so, asking why I cried and what had happened.

"Something has, I know; but I can't remember what it is," he said. "But never mind. We'll meet it bravely together, little Annie-mother, and Fanny will be here to-morrow.

That thought comforted him, and many times during the night as I sat by him he asked if it were to-morrow yet.

"The to-morrow, you know, when *she* is coming," he would add, and to this I could truthfully answer no, even when it was the dawn of the to-morrow he had anticipated so much and the grey morning was looking in at the windows.

At an early hour Phyllis came to relieve me, and shivering in every limb and with my head aching as if it would burst, I crept up to my bed, where I fell at once into a heavy sleep which lasted for hours. When I awoke both Phyllis and the doctor were with me. The latter held a telegram from Katy, saying that she and Miss Errington would come that day as they had arranged. My first inquiry was for Jack.

"I am afraid he is in for brain fever," the doctor said. "He has been working very hard lately, and this, with the wetting he got last night and the terrible blow have proved more than he can bear. He is apt to be flighty from pain anyway and is crazy as a loon this morning and is asking first if it is to-morrow, then for Fanny and then for Annie-mother. That I reckon is you, but you are better where you are for a day or so, or I shall have

two on my hands, and I fancy Jack will be about as much as I can manage."

"Oh, I must get up," I said, trying to rise, when a sharp pain in the back of my head pulled me back.

"I told you so," the doctor said. "You've got neuralgia in your neck. You never changed your wet clothes at all last night, Phyllis says, and if you don't look out you'll have pneumonia and the Lord knows what else. You must keep quiet."

I had no choice but to obey, the pain in my neck was so severe, and were I to try I could not narrate what came with and followed that to-morrow of which Jack had talked so much and which was ushered in so sadly. This task devolves upon another.

PART III.

FAN-AND-ANN AND JACK.

CHAPTER I.—AUTHOR'S STORY.

HOW LOVERING RECEIVED THE NEWS.

THE news that Fanny Hathern had jilted Jack Fullerton and married Col. Errington flew like wild-fire and set the little town of Lovering ablaze with excitement and indignation. The doctor had told it to his wife the night after his return from The Elms, adding that she'd better keep dark until she heard it from some other source. But whether she kept dark or not everybody knew it by ten o'clock the next morning. Women who had not called upon their neighbors for weeks remembered suddenly

that they had an errand, and were seen hurrying through the streets talking to everyone they met and then hastening on to other listeners, who in turn told it to all whom they saw. By twelve o'clock the story had received the addition that Jack Fullerton was at The Elms raving with brain fever and likely to die as the result of Col. Errington's perfidy. Usually it is the woman who gets the most censure; in this case it was the man, whom all remembered as the haughty officer who had come into their midst with his troops and levied upon them for whatever he wished to have. And now he had put the crowning act to his other misdeeds by running off with Fanny Hathern and possibly causing Jack Fullerton's death. There had hardly been more excitement in town when the news first came that Sumter had fallen than there was now. Even the men stopped each other to discuss it, and nowhere were there louder or more indignant voices heard than just outside a small corner grocery which bore the sign, "Sam Slayton, dealer in the finest groceries and freshest vegetables this side of the Potomac."

Sam was a character. A long, lean, light-haired Yankee from Vermont, who, three or four years before had come to Lovering and opened a grocery, with the boast that he was "goin' to show them Southerners a thing or two." He had been in the Federal army and had passed through Lovering with some of his company, spending the night there and "painting the town red," as he expressed it, in the confession he made when he came back a second time with the intention of settling. He was young then and out on a big lark and he had it, and stole a hen from "widder" Simmons's roost, and some "aigs" from another, and threw a stone at a boy who called him a mud-sill. It missed the boy and broke a window light in a tin-shop.

"But lan sakes," he added, "I was a boy then. I'm a man now, and different. I'm converted, and have brought money to pay for the hen and the aigs and the pane of glass. I liked the looks of your pretty little town among the Virginny hills and thought I'd like to live here, and when Mirandy,—that's the girl I'm engaged to, she's weakly, and coughs,—and when she said she'd live longer in a milder climate than Vermont, I thought of Lovering, and here I am, and as soon as I get a little forehanded, with a house to live in, I shall fetch Mirandy down, and a better woman you never seen."

This was what Sam said to the people with whom he had come to live, never doubting in his simple heart that he should be received into favor at once. But war prejudices died hard, especially at the south where the feeling of having been conquered rankled the most and longest. No one who looked in Sam's honest face doubted his integrity or good feeling, but he was from the north,—he had fought against them, and although they took his cash for the stolen property, and knew that his store was brighter and cleaner and his groceries better than any in Lovering, their patronage was slow in coming. For four years he had held his ground valiantly, with but little more hope of making Mirandy his wife than when he first started in business. Once when a knot of men were seated upon the comfortable seats he had himself built on two sides of his grocery so that "tired folks could rest themselves and see all that was going on around the four corners," he held forth feelingly on the subject, asking why under the sun and moon they didn't trade with him as well as to *set* on his benches.

"Is it because I fit you? Bless your souls, I buried the ax, handle and all, the minute the last gun was fired, and

I gin the shirt on my back for a piller for one of your fel lows I found dyin' in the Wilderness, and I hear his God bless you, just before he died, now. I didn't blame him an atom, nor you nuther. If I'd been born south I'd of jined you of course. As I was from the north I jined the Federal army and would do it agin; not that I had any spite agin you personally, but for the flag,—the principle —not the nigger. Da——! I beg pardon, I don't swear now. I took my chances and got stuck into Libby prison, where I didn't lead the most luxurious life. But lan, sakes, 'twas the fate of war, and I never complained, nor said a word but once, and that when a chap brought me some beef no human could eat. Says I, 'No you don't get that stuff into my stomach. I'm fond of fresh meat, but darned if I'll eat maggits.' He smiled and said low: 'I don't blame you. It's the best I can do. Our boys up to Chicago are eatin' *rat* pies.' 'Rats,' I said, 'Lord of heavens, give me rats, by the million. They're dainties to this vermin.' 'You bet,' he said, and pulled a cracker out of his pocket and handed me on the sly. I guess he had some tobacker in with it by the flavor, but I never tasted a better cracker than that. The first greenback I got after I left Libby I sent to him. He's up north now, the best reconstructed reb you ever see,—married my sister and got twin boys; calls 'em Jefferson Davis and Abraham Lincoln. That's the way to do things."

This speech of Sam's was received with shouts of laughter and three cheers for the twins, Abraham Lincoln and Jefferson Davis, while one man ordered half of a codfish and another bought a cigar. Here their patronage stopped, but it is a long lane which never turns and Sam's was destined to turn at last by a few chance words spoken at the right time.

On their way home a knot of men met and seated themselves upon Sam's benches, eagerly discussing the news of the morning which was in everyone's mouth and greatly exaggerated by this time. Jack was going to die, and the Colonel had run off with Fanny Hathern against her will. Whether he had married her or not was a question. Probably not, and dire was the vengeance declared against him by the workmen gathered near Sam's door. Among them sat Sam, a big knife in his hand, and sticking to it a thin slice of rich cream cheese, which he passed from one to another, asking if they ever tasted anything better than that, and telling them Mirandy made it on her father's farm in Vermont. Among those who denounced Col. Errington no one was louder than Sam.

"I know him, root and branch," he said, with a flourish of his cheese knife. "I was in his regiment part of the time till I got took and shut up in Libby, and a meaner man never rode a hoss into battle. Brave enough, but has a temper hard and cruel, and no more feelin' than a stun. Cap'n Fullerton is wuth a thousand such men as Col. Errington, and so Miss Hathern will find to her sorrer. I b'lieve he merried her though. She ain't the stuff as would go with him without the ceremony, but I tell you agin she's flung overboard a gentleman for as mean and unprincipled a *cuss* as ever walked. Smooth and polished outside with his equals, but inwardly,—what's that the scripter says about *inwardly*, I or'to know, but my mem'ry fails me."

The memories of all the audience failed them, if they had any, and, besides, they were rather actively dodging the cheese knife which was flourishing at a great rate as Sam waxed eloquent on the subject of Col. Errington. They knew Sam had been in his regiment and half ex-

pected he would try to defend him, but he denounced him more hotly than they had done, and every shred of prejudice, if they really had any, against the kind-hearted man slipped away. He was a good sort after all, and one of them remembered that he wanted some plug tobacco and asked if he had any good.

"Tons of it. Want some?" Sam replied, entering his store and bringing out the tobacco.

Another man suddenly bethought him that his wife had told him not to come home without coffee. He had intended getting it at the Red Cross grocery, where he always traded, but he ordered it of Sam, who, when the scale showed just a pound, put in a little more.

"Good weight is my rule," he said, as he tied up the package and hastened to weigh out another.

The aroma of his Mocha and Java mixed had filled the store, and his coffee was in great demand, as well as his cheese. Sugar and eggs followed next, and never had he done so thriving a business in any two hours as in the half hour which followed his vituperation against Col. Errington.

"If I keep on this way, I can have Mirandy down next fall," he thought, as he counted his gains that night and carried his tin box to the little room over his grocery where he had slept for the last four years.

While the men talked the matter over in the streets and the post-office and hotel, and in front of Sam's store, the women were just as busy. The friends of the Hatherns,—the upper crust, as they were called by those who felt themselves to be the *under crust*,—gathered in each other's parlors and discussed it quietly, while another class of women and children, twenty or more, felt irresistibly drawn to the house on The Plateau. They had seen

it a hundred times and some of them had been over it when it was open to the public, but now that the bride for whom it was built would never occupy it, it was invested with a new interest, and after dinner they walked up the hill and around the house, staring at the windows and roofs and chimneys and wishing they could get in and see the fine fixings they had heard were there. When they reached the rear door they saw in it the key which Jack in his excitement had forgotten to remove. This they looked upon as a special interposition of Providence in their behalf and one of which they immediately availed themselves. Wiping their muddy feet carefully upon the mat they filed into the house which, with no one to restrain them, they examined curiously and minutely, commenting freely as they went, but for the most part favorably, upon what they saw, wondering what it all cost and if Jack could afford it. His mother, they knew, did not leave him much, and they never supposed he had a great deal laid up. Consequently, he must have borrowed the money for all this finery, the like of which they did not believe was to be found in Richmond, no, nor in Washington either. The bridal chamber attracted them most. Into this they entered very quietly, speaking as low and stepping as softly as we do when we go into the chamber of death. It had been the scene of the death of all Jack's hopes, and they sat in the chair where he had sat when he read the fatal letter, and tried the chair in the bay window where Fanny was to sit and watch for him, and admired the dainty white spread and pillow-shams and medallion which they mistook for Fanny's portrait, and some of the more curious lifted the bedclothes to see what was under them.

"A hair mattress a foot thick, as I live. I reckon that cost a heap," one said, while another pronounced it a

piece of extravagance, knowing as she did that "old Miss Fullerton had left five or six good feather-beds,—geese feathers, too!"

Next to the bridal chamber, the upright Steinway in the parlor below attracted their attention most, and as they found it unlocked several fingers were soon drumming on the keys, which Jack had said no hands should touch until Fanny had played him his favorite airs. Poor Jack! When the house had been thoroughly inspected and pronounced good enough for a queen to live in, it was nearly time for the Richmond train. It was generally known in town that Miss Errington and Katy Hathern were expected, and the women decided to go round to the station and see if they came. They had known Katy all her life, and ordinarily would scarcely have walked half a block out of their way just to see her. Recent events, however, had made a change, and then they were anxious to see Miss Errington, who, as sister of the man who had married Fanny Hathern so hurriedly, was an object of greater curiosity than Katy herself. Others in Lovering were of the same mind, and at least fifty people, black and white, of both sexes and all ages, were assembled upon the platform when the 4 o'clock train came in, stopping farther down than usual so that the ladies who were in the rear car did not alight in the midst of the crowd, jostling and pushing each other for a sight of them.

"There they be; that's Miss Katy. How tall and pale she looks, and how becoming that gown is to her, and, yes, that must be Miss Errington. How proud she looks; stylish, though," were the remarks which passed from lip to lip as Katy and her friend stopped for a moment, half bewildered by the number of people who did not attempt to come nearer, but stood staring at them.

"There's Dr. Carter," Katy exclaimed joyfully, as she saw the doctor elbowing his way to her.

He had expected something of the kind which had happened, and had come to meet the ladies in a close carriage which was standing in the rear of the station.

"Oh, I am so glad, and why are all these people here? What has happened?" Katy said, as she gave both hands to the doctor.

"Nothing; nothing. Just out for an airing; you know you are a traveled individual, and they want to see if you have changed," the doctor said laughingly, as he took off his hat to Miss Errington, whose satchel his servant was taking.

Katy understood and her face was scarlet. She was sharing in Fanny's notoriety and paying in part the penalty of her wrong-doing. Had Fanny been there she would have held her head high and walked over the crowd without seeing it. Katy was of different fibre and shrank from the curious eyes. But when, as she passed through their midst so many greeted her with "How d'ye, Miss Katy, glad to see you home again," she began to lose the feeling that some blame or disgrace was attaching to her, and smiled upon them through the tears she could not repress. A moment more and she, with Miss Errington, was in the carriage and driving rapidly toward The Elms.

Chapter II.—Author's Story Continued.

AT THE ELMS.

All day Jack had been flighty and talked continually, Sometimes he was in the war, ready for battle, and was pointing out Col. Errington to his men. "That's he," he would say; "that tall, straight officer on the big black horse, holding himself as loftily as if he owned every foot of the south. Spot him, and fire at him and at no one else until you see him fall." Again, he was at The Plateau, reading the cruel letter, parts of which had burned themselves into his brain. "It took Errington and his money, and the dreary life at Lovering she so much dreaded to tip the scale and send me flying, after all;" he said to Phyllis, who, half beside herself, was kept going from the kitchen to him, from him to Annie, and from Annie back to the kitchen and Paul, who, neglected and feeling vaguely that something was wrong, was crying for Fan-er-nan to come and bring him the horse she had promised him in one of her letters. Fanny's name Jack never mentioned. It was "she," or "her," or, "the little girl on the headboard," who, he said, was laughing at his coarse clothes and country ways, and he asked Phyllis to take her away before he split the headboard in pieces. He did make an attempt at it, but Phyllis restrained him, telling him "there wan't any gal there laughing at him." Jack insisted there was, and was threatening to split poor old Phyllis's head open if she didn't put her out, when the doctor came in for the second time and with him a neighbor who was to stay that day at least, and longer if necessary. To him Jack at once appealed with regard to the mocking girl on the headboard,

growing so wild and unmanageable that the bedstead was finally exchanged for a cot which had no headboard. Then Jack grew quiet, but asked for the little woman, Annie-mother, who had cried with him and helped him drive home. Where was she? Had she gone back on him, too, and was it to-morrow, yet? If so, he must get up, for *she* was coming and he must go to meet her. On his flushed face there was an eager look as he said *she* is coming, but it faded almost as soon as it came, and was succeeded by one of inexplicable pain as some wave of memory brought the truth in part to him.

"What is it I am trying to remember?" he asked. "What was it that swooped down so suddenly upon me, blotting out everything and making me doubt even God himself? Annie-mother knows; call her. Tell her *I* want her,—Jack Fullerton, late of the——Regiment of Volunteers."

But Annie-mother was too ill to go to him. Two or three times she had tried to rise, and as often had given it up, mastered by the cutting pain in her right temple and behind her ear The long time she had sat by the open window with the cold November rain and wind beating upon her, had borne fruit in a severe attack of neuralgia, which made it impossible for her to rise, and she lay listening intently to every sound below and wondering how Phyllis would get through the day without her, and wishing that Miss Errington were not coming. Friend after friend came in offering their services, which seemed to be needed in the kitchen quite as much as elsewhere, for Phyllis had lost her head with worriment, as she expressed it.

"I kin woller through with the work," she said, while the tears rolled down her black face. "It's the disgrace

to the family I feel the wust,—the dido Miss Fanny done cut up, and broke Mas'r Jack's heart smack in two. I hearn it snap myself. An' Miss Annie feels een 'most as bad as if she done it herself, bein' she's Miss Fanny's twin, an' they two were boun together like dem ar Simon twins, what you call 'em. Oh, dat I had died in de wah, or runned away, afore I done got so I dunno my dish cloth from de han'-towel, an' uses 'em promiscous, an' Miss Katy comin' to-night, an' dat ar Miss Errin'ton. I wish to de Lord she'd staid away."

This was said to some ladies who were interviewing Phyllis in her kitchen, which was in wild disorder, while the old woman herself was wilder, and once as she talked came near seating herself on the range instead of the stool she was looking for. As a result three or four negroes were sent to The Elms from as many different houses, and when the carriage containing Miss Errington and Katy drove up there was a group of dusky faces peering from the windows of the kitchen, where none of them knew what to do, and each one was so much in the others' way and in Phyllis's that she had more than once been on the point of sending them home.

"Oh, de good Lord, thar they is," she exclaimed, rushing to open the side door, and throwing her arms around Katy with a force which lifted her from her feet and nearly squeezed the breath from her body. "Bress de dear lamb. Who'd of b'lieved you'd ever comed home like dis yer, an' Mas'r Jack a dyin', an' Miss Annie mos' as bad, an' me so upsot I do' know what to do wid company," she said, with a side glance at Miss Errington, who understood her at once.

"Don't call me company," she said, laying her hand kindly on Phyllis's shoulder. "I have come to help; not

to be in the way. Show me my room, and after that I shall wait upon myself, and you, too, if necessary."

Wholly disarmed and mollified, Phyllis conducted the lady to her room, and after standing irresolute a while mustered courage to say, "Has you done hearn from her?"

For a moment Miss Errington's dark eyes flashed; then she answered quietly, "I had a line from my brother written on the ship just before it sailed. She was well then, and happy, he wrote."

"Happy! May the Lord forgive her. I shouldn't s'pose she'd sleep o' nights," was Phyllis's retort, as she bounced from the room.

Meanwhile Katy had been busy with Paul, who was asking for Fan-er-nan, and the horse on wheels with saddle and bridle she was to bring him.

"Fanny won't come to-day, nor to-morrow, nor for many to-morrows," Katy said to him. "She has gone off in a big ship, but I have brought you the horse, and a heap more toys in my trunk, which the expressman will soon bring to the house."

Thus quieted Paul drew his high chair to the window to watch for the express wagon, while Katy went up to her sister's room.

"Oh, Katy, Katy," Annie exclaimed, springing up, unmindful of the pain which cut her like a knife. Throwing her arms around her sister's neck, she sobbed, "I am so glad to have you back, and so sorry, too, for the sad home coming. We meant to have it so different."

"I know," Katy replied, sitting down upon the bed, and passing her hand soothingly over the right temple where the veins were standing out large and full.

There was healing in the touch of Katy's fingers, or

excitement had driven the pain away for the time being, and Annie lay down upon her pillow quiet and easy.

"Have you heard from her?" she asked, in a whisper, and Katy answered, "Just a few lines from New York saying she was married Friday night at the hotel, and had written you full particulars. Miss Errington also had a note from her brother, written on the Celtic, and brought back in the tug which accompanied it down the bay. There were notices of the marriage in the Washington papers and in New York. He sent them, of course."

"Tell me what you know, and if you had any suspicion," Annie said, still in a whisper, as if the subject were one of she could not speak aloud.

"Not the slightest, and that seems so strange," Katy replied. "I knew he admired her; everybody did, and his attentions were rather marked, both in Saratoga and Washington. She, however, seemed wholly indifferent, even snubbed him at times, I thought, and made fun of him to me, calling him Uncle George and bald-head, and all that. Still she was not happy, or at least she was nervous and restless and discontented, and talked of Lovering as a place one hundred years behind the times, and wondered how she was ever to be contented here after having seen the world. When buying her trousseau she was always wishing for more money that it might be more elaborate. Then she would laugh and say 'What's the use of clothes with nobody to see them but Lovering people,—nowhere to wear them except to church and the sewing society.' She never talked this way before Miss Errington, but was always amiable and seemingly in good spirits, talking to her of the house on The Plateau and the pleasure it would be to entertain her there. Toward the last, however, there was a change

Twice I found her crying, and once she wished herself dead. When I asked her if she didn't love Jack, she turned to me fiercely and replied, 'Love Jack? Yes, far more than I wish I did. He is the best man that ever lived, or ever will live. I wish he were not so good.' I know now what she meant, but had no suspicion then. Thursday we were to do our last shopping, but she excused herself, saying her head ached, and Miss Errington and I went without her. When we came home her head still ached, but she was in high spirits. I believe she sat up half that night writing to you and packing her trunk. She only took her best clothes. The others I have brought home. The Colonel was to leave the next morning for New York, and his sister and I were going with him. To her it was a thunderbolt when he said, in his cold, decided way, as if from what he said there could be no demur, 'Miss Hathern has at last consented to be my wife and go with me to Europe. She will accompany me to New York and we shall be married this evening at the Fifth Avenue Hotel. You can still go with me if you like, and take Miss Katy, too.' It was Miss Errington who told me, and I hardly knew her she was so transformed with surprise and indignation. She couldn't stand she shook so, and her face was white as marble as she said 'It is not that I object to seeing your sister my brother's wife under different circumstances. It is the sin,—the cruelty to Mr. Fullerton, which I deplore.' Nothing could move Fanny from her purpose. She had made up her mind, and could not unmake it. Oh, Annie, it was terrible when we said good-bye and I knew she would go. And she looked so beautiful, too,—but as if carved in stone, as Miss Errington freed her mind. 'You will repent this to your dying day, she said, and I wish you could have seen the hard, sneering

look in the Colonel's eyes as he listened. Such a look would have made me turn back if I were already at the altar. Fanny may have won a bed of gold, but it will not be one of roses. She loves Jack. She does not love Col. Errington, and he knows it, and by and by, when the novelty is gone and the freshness of her beauty begins to wane, God pity her,—and Jack, poor Jack, tell me about him and how he took it."

It was Annie's turn now to take up the story and tell what the reader already knows of the scene in the house on The Plateau when Jack learned the truth and read the letter which Katy now read with streaming eyes.

"Oh, Annie," she said, when she had finished it. "This is dreadful. How could she write it, and how could you let Jack see it?"

"He would; I had no choice in the matter," Annie said, adding that she still had the note written to him and the hundred dollars sent in her letter. "I took his note from the table where he had left it unread, and shall give it to him when he is better. Have you seen him?"

"Not yet, but am going now," Katy answered, as she arose and left the room. She found Jack quiet, but greatly changed. The last twenty-four hours had told fearfully upon him, and his face, though flushed, was drawn and pinched, and in his eyes there was a hopeless look pitiful to see.

"Jack, do you know me? I am Katy," she said, laying her hand upon his hot forehead, just as she had lain it on Annie's.

For a moment he regarded her intently, associating her in some way with the to-morrow he had anticipated so much. Then he smiled faintly and said, "Sometimes I do, and sometimes I don't; it comes and goes, with some-

thing that was to make me very glad. Is it to-morrow, and where is Annie-mother?"

Katy knew what he meant by to-morrow, as Annie had told her, and she answered him, "Not to-morrow yet. It is to-day, and Annie has a bad headache. She will come to you as soon as it is better."

"All right," Jack said. "Tell her I am sorry her head aches; so does mine. I ache all over. Something happened, I can't think what. It comes and goes, like a forgotten name you are trying to recall; only it isn't a name. I sweat so trying to remember. Annie knows; poor little Annie. She cried with me, or for me, and the rain fell on us and made me cold, and it was dark, oh so dark."

At that moment Paul came running in with the horse in his hand. It had been packed in Miss Errington's trunk, and when the baggage came she took it out at once for the impatient child. He had been told not to go into the sick-room, but seeing the door open and hearing Katy's voice he rushed in with his horse exclaiming, "Look Katy, it's come. See, Jack, what Fan-er-nan sent me. She's gone on a ship."

Jack caught the name, and starting up exclaimed, "That's what I have been trying to remember. It *is* to-morrow and she has not come. She will never come. Fanny, Fanny, come to me, come."

Stretching out his arms as if to embrace some one he fell back upon his pillow, white and exhausted, while Katy tried to quiet him. It seemed to her as if Fanny must have heard that cry of anguish which brought both Phyllis and Miss Errington to the door of the room.

"My brother has much to answer for," Miss Errington said under her breath, while Phyllis ejaculated, "May

the Lord forgive them!" as she hurried back to the kitchen and her preparations for supper, which were greatly retarded by the unsettled condition of her nerves.

"I am that oversot that I don't know a corn cake from a pone of bread, and you must s'cuse me if things ain't jess squar. What with de kitchen, an' dem niggers in my way, an' Miss Annie an' Mas'r Jack, I loses my balance," she said to Miss Errington, who came for hot water with which to bathe Annie's head.

"I tell you again not to mind me," Miss Errington replied. "I can take care of myself, and cook the dinner for the others, if necessary. I know how to do everything."

"You do! That beats all," Phyllis exclaimed, placing both hands on her hips and regarding intently the tall, majestic lady, whose proud face, handsome dress and white, jeweled hands looked as if they had never done so much as to pick up her own handerchief.

But her looks belied her. Born and reared in New York City in the midst of luxury, she was fortunate in having had a mother who required her daughter to learn to do everything necessary to the comfort of a household. Orphaned soon after leaving school she had for years presided over her brother's house in Washington, and often boasted that if every servant left her she could prepare her own meals and do whatever there was to be done, except the washing. She drew the line at that. She had at first hesitated about coming to The Elms in the present state of affairs, but urged by Katy, who was greatly attached to her, she had made up her mind to do so. The loneliness of the house in Washington would be intolerable, and something told her that she might be of service at The Elms. She was sure of it when she

saw how matters were and how inefficient Phyllis was, or rather how unequal to the emergency.

" 'Tain't laziness, nor onwillin'ness; de Lord knows I'd lay down and let 'em trample on me, if that would help any. It's the worrit an' buzzin' in my head," she said, when, after supper she was washing the silver and china which Miss Errington insisted upon wiping for her. The negroes had been sent home and Phyllis was alone, when Miss Errington offered her services.

" You look tired," she said; and Phyllis was tired, for she had been on her feet all day, and as soon as her dishes were washed she sank down into a rocking-chair near the range and went fast asleep, in the midst of pots and kettles and brushes and brooms, which would have elicited groans of disapproval from Norah O'Rourke and alarming creaks from her shoes, could she have seen them, under ordinary circumstances when there was no excuse for the untidiness.

The next morning dawned dark and dreary, with a cold November rain. Annie, who had slept quietly and late, was so much better that she began to worry about the kitchen arrangements.

" What did you have for breakfast, and how was it served? Phyllis is getting old and careless," she said to Katy, who had brushed her hair, brought her a clean white dressing jacket and was tidying up the room in which a bright fire, kindled before Annie was awake, was burning.

" We have not had it yet, but it is ready," Katy replied, with a ring of excitement in her voice. " Oat-meal and cream, and steak and muffins and everything. You are to have yours at once. Come in," she added, in response to a knock, or rather a kick upon the door, which was a

little ajar and through which Norah O'Rourke came with a broad smile on her face and in her hands a big tray loaded with delicacies.

"Norah! Norah! Where did you come from? I am so glad," Annie exclaimed, and forgetting the disgust she had felt when she saw Mrs. Hathern kissing Norah on her first arrival at The Elms she threw her arms around the woman's neck and held her close, crying hysterically in her great joy and relief in seeing her again.

Norah, who had missed the express from Richmond the day before, had come in the night train, reaching Lovering very early that morning. In his last letter to her Jack had told her to go at once to The Plateau. As there was no conveyance at the station she had walked to The Plateau, and been struck with the desolate appearance of the house, around which there was no sign of life, although the key was in the door. Entering she made the tour of the house, noting everything, from the tumbled appearance of the white spread on the bed in the bridal chamber, where the women had inspected the hair mattress, to the soiled footprints on the kitchen floor.

"Where is everybody?" she thought, just as a sound outside attracted her attention.

Going out, she met a negro who looked as if he might be prowling about rather than there for any good.

"Lor-a-mighty," he exclaimed, "How you scar't me! I didn't think nobody was here."

"Where are the folks? Mr. Fullerton, I mean," Norah asked, and then listened wonderingly to the story the negro told.

"Miss Fanny done run off wid anoder man, an' Mas'r Fullerton gone ravin' mad wid de fever down to de Elms, and Miss Annie iest as bad, an' de ole Harry to pay generally."

"And the house left alone with the key in the door. That's shiftlessness, and accounts for them mud tracks. Some truck has been here," Norah said, pocketing the key and starting rapidly for The Elms, which she reached just as the sun was rising and Phyllis was banging at the range in her efforts to rekindle the fire which had gone out.

To dump the grate and make a fresh fire was a sore trial to Phyllis, who had never ceased to long for the old kitchen under the dogwood tree.

"I wish de whole caboose was in Tophet," she said, when turning round she saw Norah standing in the door with an expression on her face which she remembered so well.

Never doubting that it was a ghost the old negress sank down upon the range, the griddles of which were off, her eyes taking in, as Norah's had done, the littered condition of the room.

"I was gwine to clar up to-day; de good Lord knows I was," she said apologetically, her hands thrown out to keep Norah off as she advanced into the room.

"Don't be a fool, Phyllis," Norah said. "I'm myself in flesh and blood; just come in the train. Get off that range before you break it down with your three hundred pounds of fat. Put in more kindlings and a little kerosene if you want the fire to burn quick."

"De Lord be praised! I thought you was a spook," Phyllis exclaimed, as she extricated herself from the range and sank panting into a chair with a shaving or two and some splinters of dry wood adhering to her dress.

Throwing off her bonnet and shawl Norah began to make the fire, which was soon crackling and blazing and diffusing a genial warmth through the chilly room, while Phyllis told the story of their troubles.

"Miss Fanny done gone an' married Col. Errin'ton, an' Mas'r Jack mighty bad in ole Mas'r's room, an' Miss Annie bad upstairs, an' company in de house, an' herself so oversot an' 'scouraged that she didn't know enough to make a fire or get breakfast either."

As she talked the tears rolled down her face, and her hands shook as they rested on her lap.

"You poor old soul!" Norah said, in a tone she had never before used towards Phyllis, who now broke down entirely, while Norah tried to comfort her. "You're tired out; that's the upshot of the matter," she said. "Just sit still where you are, and I'll get breakfast."

As she talked she picked up broom and brush and pails and kettles and skillets and spiders, and put them in their places, and then moved from the pantry to the range, and from the range back to the pantry, with the bustling activity of old, while Phyllis sat and watched her, crying softly, but never offering even a suggestion. The sceptre had passed from her hands, and she was so tired and worn and felt so keenly the trouble which had come upon them that it was a relief to have Norah take her place. The coffee was steaming, the muffins baking, the steak broiling when Katy appeared, almost as startled as Phyllis had been at the apparition of Norah tossing with a fork the potato she was warming in cream.

"Norah! What good angel sent you here just when we need you most?" Katy cried, as she seized Norah around the waist, feeling all care and responsibility drop from her, now that Norah was there.

Explanations followed on both sides, Norah telling how she happened to be there and Katy corroborating the story of Fanny's marriage with Col. Errington. For a moment Norah's shoes creaked threateningly as she tramped

across the floor, kicking a gourd out of her way and dropping into the vernacular, as she always did when excited.

"Drat the villian," she said. "An' sure the Lord will reward him, and her, too; and what's his sister afther down here?"

Katy told why she was there, adding that no one could be more indignant than Miss Errington at her brother's conduct. Thus mollified Norah stepped more lightly, and at Katy's suggestion kindled a fire in Annie's room so noiselessly that the girl did not awaken until just before Norah came with her breakfast. Like Katy, Annie felt the burden of anxiety with regard to the domestic arrangements slipping from her at sight of Norah. With her at the helm there could be no jars except as they came through Phyllis. But she was glad to abdicate in favor of a younger and stronger person, and received in silence Norah's rasping remarks which had to come with regard to the filth which had accumulated in the kitchen and which nothing would eradicate but strong lye and paint. This would fail to obliterate the marks of pot black and grease upon the cooking-table. Nothing but a carpenter's plane could do that.

For a few days Phyllis submitted to the inconvenience of wading a good share of the time through the soap suds with which Norah was inundating the floor, and then, one morning, before anyone was astir, she quietly removed her special belongings to the cabin she had quitted so regretfully, and where in the wide fireplace she again kindled her fire upon the hearth, hung her kettles on the crane, and roasted her potatoes in the ashes. At her next class-meeting when she told her experience she recounted among her other *massies* that "De Lord had fotched her as he did de chillun of Israel through de sea and landed her in a dry place whar no water was!"

Chapter III.—Author's Story Continued.

JACK.

The doctor could not tell at first how ill Jack really was. He had taken a severe cold and his temperature was very high, but his paroxysms of delirium were the worst features in the case, as they made him at times almost uncontrollable. Apparently he was always trying to recall something in the past which baffled his memory Again, he would declare his intention to go to The Plateau. It was no place for him at The Elms, he said, and he was going away. At such times it required all the tact and sometimes all the strength of the neighbor who was with him to keep him in bed. This man who had only come for a day or two, finally signified his intention to leave, and another must be found to take his place. In great perplexity of mind as to where to find the proper person, the doctor was riding slowly past Sam Slayton's grocery, near the door of which a knot of idlers was as usual assembled. Reining in his horse he asked if they knew of any able-bodied man willing to undertake the task of nursing Mr. Fullerton, or rather of keeping him in bed.

"He is not dangerously sick," he said, "but the trouble has upset his brain and by spells he is crazy as a loon and bound to get up. Some day he will scare the women folks to death rushing into their midst, quite *au naturel* you know."

The doctor knew a little French and was fond of airing it occasionally. His hearers understood him, however, but no one spoke until Sam, who had been revolving the question, said, "I have had some experience in nussin'.

After I got that bullet in me at Gettysburg I was sent to the con-*val*-escent hospital. When I got better I was detailed to wait on some of the sick soldiers, who said I done tip-top; most as well, in fact, as the young gals who used to come in every day and insist on doing something, if it was only to wash our faces. I'll bet some of us had 'em washed a dozen times a day by as many different gals, God bless 'em. Wall, as I was sayin', I'll go and see what I can do with the Cap'n, just to spite that cuss of a Colonel."

"Can you leave your business?" the doctor asked, feeling that this strong man, who had something mesmeric and masterful about him, was just the one he wanted.

"Wall, you see," Sam replied with a laugh, "my business ain't no great, though it picked up a little yesterday and to-day. I can leave it for a spell, I guess. Or maby these chaps'll run it for me; I can trust 'em."

It was Sam's nature to trust everybody, and three or four at once volunteered to see to his grocery, "And we'll build you up a good business, too, and not steal more than half the plunder," they said. As a result of this Sam left his grocery in charge of his friends, with the injunction that old Miss Bower, who lost four boys in the war, should have good measure, and a cent a pound less for her groceries than the usual price, and that old man Coulter, who lost both his legs at Antietam was to have his tobacco free, if he didn't call for it too often and in too large quantities. The three who received these and similar orders looked wonderingly at each other, thinking they were just beginning to know how big and generous a heart there was in this great, awkward fellow, who was installed in Jack's sick-room late on Thanksgiving night.

The day had been a sad one at The Elms. With her New England ideas and habits Norah had declared there should be at least a cracker pudding and a chicken pie; it wouldn't be worth while to give thanks without as much as that. So, between her efforts at cleaning and scrubbing the floor and planing the cooking-table, she managed these delicacies; but the turkey, to whom so many promises of decapitation had been made by Phyllis remained in his coop, waiting for a future day when the appetites of the family would be better than they were now.

Paul was the only one who enjoyed the dinner. The others were thinking sadly how changed was the day from what they had anticipated. Miss Errington was especially quiet and somber, with the same look on her face which it had worn since her brother said to her "I am to marry Fanny Hathern." She had gone out that morning after breakfast, and enquiring her way to the telegraph office had sent a cablegram to her brother's address in London. It was directed to Fanny, and read: "The Elms. Thanksgiving morning. To Mrs. G. W. Errington. Mr. Fullerton is here, and dangerously ill with brain fever. Recovery doubtful. C. Errington."

She knew that she possibly stretched a point in saying "Recovery doubtful," although she tried to persuade herself that she did not. A man as strong and fullblooded as Mr. Fullerton was apt to die when smitten with fever, she reasoned, and she experienced a kind of pleasure in thinking how this first news from home would affect her brother's wife. "She deserves it, and worse," she reflected, as she walked back to The Elms, where she found Annie down stairs.

"I could not stay in bed any longer," she said, "and I wanted to see Jack."

He was lying very quiet and seemed to be asleep when she went in and sat down beside him. But he soon grew restless, and his eyes, bright with fever, fixed themselves curiously upon her.

"Annie-mother," he said, reaching out his hand and taking hers in it, "I am glad you have come. You almost make me know what I am trying to remember and can't. Was it the house on The Plateau, and is Norah up there? I am sure I have heard her voice, and another strange one. The house must be full of people. Send them away. They mustn't know what it is I can't recall." After that his mind began to wander on other subjects,—mostly debts, which he said he must see to.

"What debts?" Annie asked, but he only replied, "They make my head ache so. I was never in debt before."

"I think it was for furnishing his house," Annie said in a whisper to Miss Errington, who had stepped to the room for the first time.

Jack saw her and his eyes glared wildly as, clutching Annie's hand, he whispered, "Who is that tall woman? Where have I seen her? Looks like a general in petticoats, and, oh-h, Annie, she is like *him*; send her away."

If Miss Errington were a general in petticoats she was not one to retreat at the first gun fired at her, and going up to Jack she laid her hand on his forehead, and said in her decided, straight forward way, "I am his sister, but your friend and Annie's. I have come to help her and you. You will let me stay, won't you?"

His lip quivered, but he did not answer, nor did he try to withdraw from the touch of her soothing hand. She had conquered him, and she sat by him a long time, asking him once, when he began to rave about his debts, how

much they were and where they were. Very curtly he told her it was none of her business, adding that she might find out if she could.

That night Sam Slayton came in his best clothes, plaid vest and red tie, looking the typical Brother Jonathan, as he said to Jack, "Wall, how are you, Cap'n? Goin' to pull through, ain't you?"

"Pull through what? and who are you?" Jack asked, adding quickly, "Oh, I know; you're that Yankee grocer. Pretty good sort of a fellow they say."

"Thank you, Square," Sam replied; after that, calling him alternately the Cap'n and the Square, as the fancy took him.

From the first there was amity between the two. Sam was so original and good-natured, with so quaint a way of putting things that the humor of it penetrated Jack's clouded brain, and more than once, as the evening wore on, he laughed heartily at something Sam said to him. The next day there came a trial of strength, Jack declaring he would get up and go and pay his debts, and Sam telling him he could not. Laying his arm, big as a sledge hammer, across Jack's chest he kept him down until he became perfectly quiet and said, with a laugh, "Licked again; that was always the way in the war; just as we thought we'd got the upper hand there came along the lines the rumor they are coming, they are coming, 300,000 more, and, by George, they did come, and when we shot down one, ten took his place. You were like the bear the old Vikings used to boil and eat in the morning in the hall of Valhalla, and which at night was alive and peart as ever and ready to be boiled again. Heard of him, haven't you?"

Sam didn't quite think he had, but he knew "We are

coming, Father Abram, three hundred thousand more," and could sing it, too; should he?

"Yes, go it," Jack said, and immediately Sam began the famous war song.

> "We are coming, Father Abram,
> Three hundred thousand more,
> From the mountains of New England
> To the California shore."

Sam had a rich, full voice, with a note of pathos in it, which made one forget its slightly nasal twang, and not only Jack but the ladies in the adjoining room listened breathlessly until the song was ended.

"That's tip-top," Jack said. "Made me forget what I am trying to remember. Give us another. 'Three cheers for General Lee and the Southern Army, oh.' Know it?"

Sam nodded and began again, singing this time with so much feeling that either because of the music, or because it awakened in his misty brain a regret for the Lost Cause the tears gathered in his eyes and rolled down Jack's cheeks.

"I don't know why I am crying," he said apologetically, "unless it's for what I can't remember, or for the boys dead on so many battlefields, and we went into it so bravely and hopefully, like Sennacherib's army."

"Who's he? I never heard of that General, and I thought I knew 'em all," Sam asked, and Jack replied, "Have you never heard of the one hundred and eighty-five thousand able-bodied men who encamped for the night and got up in the morning all dead corpses?"

"Jerusalem! You don't say! That beats all. It must have happened when I was in Libby. How could they get up if they was dead corpses. I can't b'lieve it. That's one of your rebel yarns," Sam said.

"Bible truth," Jack rejoined, with a twinkle in his eyes as if he were enjoying Sam's discomfiture. "Now give us something jolly, like Dixie," he continued, "or that one about John Brown's body. I used to hear you fellows sing it nights when our lines were near each other. Know it?"

"I'd laugh if I didn't. I know the whole caboodle, both sides," Sam said, and for an hour or more the house rang with the old war melodies,—"Dixie," "Marching through Georgia," "My Maryland," and "John Brown's body," which last Sam sang with great gusto, especially the part relating to the apple tree.

This was the last, and Jack, who had listened to all which had gone before with lively interest began to grow excited, while his face clouded and his eyes were full of pain.

"'Stop that," he thundered, when the leader of the Southern Confederacy was threatened with suspension. "No more of that. It brings back what I have been trying to remember,—*her*. If she were here, she'd hang *you* to the sour apple tree; oh, Fanny, Fanny."

It was a bitter cry, like that at The Plateau when the shock first came upon him. As he had cried then, so he did now, with great, choking sobs, which brought Miss Errington and Annie and Katy all to his bedside. For a few minutes he was perfectly conscious and whispered amid his sobs, "It isn't manly, I know, but I can't help it, my head aches so, and I am so weak. Oh, Fanny, how could you do it."

It was Annie who succeeded in quieting him, and he at last fell asleep with one of her hands holding his and the other upon his forehead.

"Little Annie-mother, what should I do without

you?" he said, with a pitiful kind of smile as he looked at her through his tears and then closed his eyes wearily.

After this there were no more paroxysms of delirium, and he seemed partially conscious of what was passing around him. He knew Katy was there, and Miss Errington, whom he still called the general in petticoats. Every day, and many times a day, Sam sung the war songs, with every negro melody he could recall. John Brown, however, was allowed to moulder quietly in the ground, and was never sung again. As Jack grew stronger he clung more and more to Annie, who always sat with him when Sam went to see how matters were progressing at the grocery, where there were three doing business for him, and doing it well, too, judging from the returns he found in his cash drawer. Miranda seemed a near possibility, and Sam told Annie about her, and said he hoped she would call and be kind of sociable when Miranda came. He staid at The Elms a week or more, and then as Jack was improving and perfectly sane he returned to his business and Annie took his place as nurse. Fanny's name Jack never mentioned, but one day, when he had lain a long time with his eyes closed and an expression on his face as if he were intently thinking, he said to Annie suddenly, "Have you heard from—from them?"

"Yes," Annie replied. "A cablegram came from Queenstown. They were safely across, but Fan had been very sick most of the voyage, which was a rough one. There has also been another from London. It read, 'How is Jack?' and was signed 'Fanny.' Miss Errington had cabled her that you were very ill."

For a moment Jack was silent and then said, "There was a note for me which I didn't read. Do you know what became of it?"

"Yes, I have it," Annie replied, and going to her room she returned with it and the hundred dollar bill Fanny had sent in her letter.

Taking the note Jack read it with a white face and hard eyes in which there was no sign of softening. The bitterness of death was over, and he could read with comparative calmness what at first would have wrung his heart with anguish. There was nothing flippant in it, as there had been in the letter to Annie. There were self-accusations and assertions that, after what she had seen of the world, she could not endure poverty and the dull life of Lovering. If Jack were rich she should prefer him to any man in the world, she said, and she believed she did prefer him now, notwithstanding what she had done.

"I have always loved you," she wrote in conclusion, "and I meant to be true, but a stronger will than my own has mastered me. Don't despise and forget me. I couldn't bear that, and if I am ever very unhappy there will be a comfort in knowing that you love me still. Forgive me, and think of me as I used to be in the old days which seem so far away. Good-bye. FAN."

As he read this part of the letter Jack's breath came in gasps, for he understood the selfishness of the girl who, while not hesitating to break his heart, still wished to retain his love and keep him loyal to her. Tearing the note in shreds he handed them to Annie, and said, "Put them in the fire."

Raising himself on his elbow he watched them as they crisped and darkened and disappeared in smoke. Then, as if with them the past had been blotted out, he lay down again with a different look upon his face from any Annie had seen there since the day at The Plateau. His love for Fanny was dying, and the last blow had been given

by her note with which she had meant to bind him to her, in memory, at least.

"Jack," Annie said, after a moment. "Fan sent this to you in payment for Black Beauty. She wants him back," and she handed him the hundred dollar note.

She had seen him angry before, but was not prepared for the burst of passion which followed. Throwing the bill from him he exclaimed, "She is welcome to Black Beauty, and I will have none of *his* money. Take it away before I tear it up as I did her note."

It was in vain that Annie tried to explain and urge him to keep it, reminding him of the debts he must have incurred in furnishing his house and which this would help to pay. He would not listen. He had borrowed money, he said, with which to pay his bills, preferring to have one debt rather than many. This was due and the bill had perhaps been sent to him during his illness, but he would never soil his hands with any part of the money which had bought his promised wife.

"Use it yourself. I give it to you, or Paul, or Katy, as you please," he said.

In her heart Annie respected him for his decision and put the bill away till she could confer with Miss Errington with regard to it. That lady, who, her brother said, was never happier than when bossing some thing or some body, was carrying matters with a high hand at The Elms and managing generally. The bill of which Jack had spoken had been brought to the house for collection, and the man who held the note and who lived in Petersburg had said he had great need of the money, but supposed he must wait until Mr. Fullerton was better. It chanced that Miss Errington saw him, as Annie was with Jack and Katy was out. For a moment she reflected, wondering

if she dare do it. Then deciding that it was no more than what she owed Mr. Fullerton for the wrong he had received from her brother, she paid the debt and closed the transaction. This Annie told Jack when he spoke of his bill in Petersburg.

"I believe she wishes to give it to you as a kind of atonement for what her brother has done. She has plenty of money," she said.

"*Give* it to me!" Jack repeated angrily. "Does she think me a pauper? and as to *atonement*, nothing can atone, —certainly not money."

He spoke bitterly, and rising from his chair, for he was now able to be up, walked to the window, where he stood looking out upon the dreary landscape with a face sad and stern.

"Talking of *pay*," he said, turning suddenly to Annie, "I can never repay *you* for all you have been to me in the darkest hours of my life, and the trouble and care I have brought to you. But I shall never forget it. As soon as I am able I am going away from Lovering for awhile. I cannot be here on Christmas day. When I come back I shall be the same old Jack you used to know, with the past buried so deep that it will never be unearthed. I shall do nothing with the house at present. I cannot even go into it, but shall leave it in your care and Norah's. I think I shall go to Florida into the sunshine. I have not felt warm since that day at The Plateau. No matter how high my fever ran I was conscious of a cold lump like ice at my heart which nothing could melt. Sometimes when you put your hand on my forehead and when you thought I was asleep and said 'Poor Jack,' it melted a little. God bless you, Annie. You were to have been my sister. I hold you my sister still,—the best a man ever had."

He laid his hand caressingly upon her head as she stood by him, a little drooping figure, wholly unlike the queenly Fanny in her *personelle*, but so much truer and nobler in every womanly instinct.

Within a week after this conversation Jack left Lovering for Florida, under whose sunny skies he hoped to recuperate both in mind and body. Before going he had a long interview with Miss Errington, of whom he had seen but little, and for whom he had a natural prejudice. This, however, wore away as he talked with her She might be meddlesome and dictatorial, and was never happier than when attending to some one's business, but she was so thoroughly good and kind and so sincere in her desire to help one out of difficulties that few could withstand her, and Jack was not one of the few. Pay her he must, but he consented at last to be her debtor for a time and to borrow more of her if necessary.

"She is a noble woman and I am glad you have her for a friend," he said to Annie, when the interview was over. "She must have some of her brother's magnetic power to twist me round her fingers as she did. You can't do better than to be guided by her."

One thing, however, she could not persuade Jack to do, and that was to go into the house at The Plateau.

"No!" he said decidedly, when she urged that there must be a first time, and it was better to do a disagreeable thing at once, and be done with it. "I cannot go there now. It would be like looking into my coffin."

He would not even ride past it when Annie took him out to drive behind Black Beauty. Too many hopes of happiness were strangled there. "It is a haunted place to me. Later on, when I come back, I will go through it with you and see if the ghosts are there still," he said, when she suggested driving that way.

Everything pertaining to the grounds and out-buildings was left in the care of Sam Slayton, who, having won golden laurels in his nursing, was earning golden dollars in his grocery, which had become very popular and, as Sam said, was patronized by all the *e-lity* in town. Annie was to have the keys of the house and to see that it was kept in order. Nothing was to be changed; nothing removed. At this point Miss Errington interfered. It was a shame, she said, to let a fine new Steinway be ruined by standing unused in a cold house all winter. Far better negotiate for its return, even at a discount on the price.

The plan commended itself to Jack as sensible, and the instrument, on which no one had ever played, was returned to the firm from which it came and the greater portion of the money paid for it refunded. It was nearly Christmas time when Jack at last left Lovering, broken in health and spirits, but with a rebound in his sunny, genial nature, which promised much for him when time and change had healed the wound, which smarted with a fresh pain when he bade good-bye to his friends at The Elms, and especially to Annie.

"I don't know what I shall do without my little Annie-mother," he said, with a quiver in his voice as he stooped and kissed her forehead as reverently as if she had really been his mother instead of a shrinking girl whose heart throbbed with rapture for a moment, and then beat with a heavy pain at this first kiss she had ever received from Jack since he was a boy and they played the old-time games where kissing was a conspicuous feature and counted for nothing.

CHAPTER IV.—AUTHOR'S STORY CONTINUED.

CHRISTMAS AT THE ELMS.

THE day after Jack left, Annie received a letter from Fanny written at Morley's Hotel in London, where they were stopping. It was not very long, and to Annie, who knew her sister so well, it did not seem at all in Fanny's usual bright, witty vein, but rather as if written under restraint. She had been horribly seasick, she said, and if possible would rather walk home than cross the ocean again in rough weather. She had pleasant rooms at the hotel looking out on Trafalgar Square, and was enjoying the sights of London as much as she could in the fog and rain. The Colonel had met several acquaintances at the hotel and more outside, and she had attended a grand dinner in an English family and worn a lovely dress bought at Peter Robinson's, but made in Paris. The people of the house had been very attentive to her, and had told her that her accent was more English than American. The next night she was going to hear Patti in full evening dress, also bought at Peter Robinson's. After a few days they were to leave London for Paris, where they should stay until her wardrobe was complete, when they would go on to Nice and Monte Carlo, and then to Italy, spending the winter either in Florence or Rome, probably the latter. There were messages of love for Katy and Paul and Phyllis, but no allusion was made to Jack, or mention of her husband, except when she spoke of his acquaintances. She was anxious for a letter from Annie, telling her all the news, and she signed herself "Fanny."

Written with a lead pencil between the lines on the first

page, and so fine that they were scarcely legible, were the words, "Oh, Annie, what would I give to see you and Katy and Paul and the old home just for a minute! Write me often and *everything*."

The letter was directed in the Colonel's handwriting, and his sister had no doubt that his eye had seen all that was in it, except the pencil lines inserted in a sentence with which they had no connection. There was a world of homesickness in the cry, and Miss Errington read the meaning plainer than Annie did, feeling sure that her brother had already begun to bend his young wife to his iron will.

"Poor girl! I pity her," she thought, as she gave the letter back to Annie. "I shall write to your sister to-day."

Annie had written ten or twelve days before, and her letter and Fanny's had probably crossed each other. She had said nothing of the scene at The Plateau when Jack first heard the news. "What is done cannot be undone, and there is no need to try and make her wretched," she reasoned. So she merely spoke of Jack's sudden illness, saying he was at The Elms and gaining slowly. Then she tried to write naturally about Katy and Paul and Phyllis and the towns-people, and whatever else she thought would interest her sister. At the close she said, "Oh, Fan, you don't know how I miss you everywhere. When you were away with Miss Errington it was not so bad, for I thought you were coming back. Now I know you are not, and I seem to have lost half of myself and am constantly looking for it. I hope you will be happy. You always wished to go to Europe, and I think you will enjoy all you are seeing. Katy sends love and Paul a kiss to 'Fan-er-nan.' He was delighted with his horse. Lovingly, Ann."

Three days before Christmas there came to The Elms an express package directed to Fanny. In it were two boxes bearing the name of a New York firm. One contained a dozen after-dinner coffees of fine Dresden china; the other a dozen silver forks and four dozen spoons of different sizes, and a dozen pearl-handled knives, Carl's wedding present to Fanny. They were very beautiful, but it seemed to Annie like opening two coffins, and her tears came near staining the satin lining of the boxes as she bent over them and thought how Fanny's eyes would have sparkled had she been there to see them. The same train which brought the package brought also a letter from Carl written from The Windsor in New York, where he had been staying for two or three weeks.

"I got tired of loafing in Boston," he wrote, "and I thought I would try New York, and, by George, I am tired of that. I must do something or die of *ennui*. Coming to the wedding will be a little diversion, and after that I shall either open a corner grocery or go abroad. I have not decided which. I envy Jack and Fanny being settled and done for. Wish I were. I have selected at Tiffany's a wedding present, which I think Fan will like. I told them to engrave the silver '*F. H.*', and the stupid rascals have left off the '*F*,' and marked them simply '*H.*' I expect to be with you the 23rd, if nothing happens. Very truly, CARL."

There was a good deal of Carl in this letter, and Katy's eyes grew very bright for a moment, as Annie read it, and then took on a cold expression, which Miss Errington, who was watching her, could not quite understand. Annie had written to Carl in Boston, telling him there was to be no wedding, but asking him to spend Christmas with them just the same. This letter he evidently had not received. He

was coming, and they were all glad, and none more so than Norah. With all his faults there was not a better man living than Carl, she said, and her face was radiant as she prepared his favorite dishes. If they couldn't have a wedding-feast they should have a dinner that *was* a dinner, with eight or ten courses, and in the exuberance of her joy she allowed Phyllis to stone the raisins for the pudding she was going to send to the table over a blue flame of alcohol. Carl's own room was made ready for him, and every time he heard the whistle of a Richmond train Paul stationed himself at the window to watch for the village 'bus which was to bring his brother from the station. But the trains came and went and brought neither Carl nor any tidings of him, and every one gave him up but Norah. She had more faith in him than anyone else, although admitting that he was never of the same mind two hours at a time.

"But he's comin' now. I feel it in my bones," she said, and made her preparations for Christmas with as much certainty of his presence as if he were already there.

It was a dreary Christmas Eve, with dark clouds scudding across the starless sky and the wind roaring through the tall trees which skirted the avenue leading from the highway to the house, and the morning was drearier still. There had been a blizzard on the western prairies, and it was spending itself on this part of Virginia in a cold, steady rain, which drove against the windows and found its way under the door into the hall, where it stood in little puddles until Phyllis swept it out, letting in more rain as she did so, and shivering with cold as she closed the door and went into the dining-room where breakfast was upon the table and where Paul's was the only happy face. He had found his stockings full of gifts from Santa Claus, balls

and carts and tops and horns, the last of which he blew vigorously as Phyllis lifted him into his high chair and fastened on his bib. Annie was pouring the coffee when Phyllis suddenly exclaimed, 'Praise de Lord, thar's Mas'r Carl now on de step with his umberill blown t'other side out."

He did not stop to knock, but sprang into the hall, with the rain dripping from his Mackintosh and hat, and his umbrella a total wreck.

"Hallo, Hallo, Hallo, all of you," he said, as Annie and Katy and Phyllis rushed into the hall to meet him. "This is a nice go for Christmas and a wedding. Call *this* the sunny south? I am frozen to my bones," he continued, as he divested himself of his wet garments. "Don't ask me any questions until I get near a fire and that coffee, which smells so deliciously. I haven't had a decent thing to eat since I left New York and am half famished."

He was soon by the open fire in the dining-room and drinking the hot coffee which Annie poured for him.

"I meant to be here yesterday afternoon," he said, "but was too late for the train; so I came on at night in a cross between a lumber wagon and a cattle car. Never slept a wink, but I was bound to get here if I walked. What time is the ceremony, and where is Fan?" he asked. "Is she staying in her room until she bursts upon us in all her bridal splendor?"

He looked at Annie, who replied, "You didn't get my letter?"

"No. What letter? I have been in New York th weeks, and when I left Boston I didn't know how l should be gone, and gave no directions to have sent to me. My correspondence is not very anyway, and I hate to answer letters. What and where *is* Fan?"

He asked the question a little anxiously, for something in the faces at the table surprised him. It was Paul who answered. With a toot upon his horn and his mouth full of buttered muffins he said, "Fan-er-nan is mar-yed and gone to Europe."

"Married and gone to Europe!" Carl repeated. "What do you mean? Married to whom?"

"To my brother," Miss Errington said, taking upon herself the task of explaining, which she did very briefly and without comment.

"Great guns!" Carl exclaimed. "I would not have believed that of Fan. And so there is to be no wedding after all. That's too bad, and I nearly breaking my neck to get here," he continued, as he rose from the table and began to walk the floor, talking rapidly and asking many questions which no one answered. "I tell you what," he said suddenly, going up to Katy, who stood by the window looking out into the rain, "it is too bad to come all this distance without a wedding. We'll have one yet, if you say so. I'll put on my other coat and you your other gown. We'll send for the minister, and, presto! it's done! What do you say?"

There was a grey light in Katy's eyes and a ring in her voice, although she tried to laugh, as she replied, "Thank you! I'm not in so great a hurry."

There was a good deal of dignity in her manner, and her head was held high as she stepped back from him and walked into the adjoining room.

"By Jove! Something is up," Carl said under his breath. He was so accustomed to have every girl respond to his call that when he met with a rebuff it surprised him.

Katy had been so soft and yielding and so like wax in his hands when he was there before that he did not know

what to make of her now. She would thaw of course. She must, for of all the girls he had ever met Katy had made the strongest impression upon him, and was the one he liked best. Away from her he could forget her in a measure, but with her again her spell was upon him, intensified by her coolness, and if she had said so, he would have probably sent for the minister, donned his other coat and settled the matter forever. But she didn't say so, and her manner piqued and puzzled him. She was very gracious to him, however, when he joined her in the parlor after a romp with Paul, and there was a look in her eyes which made him think of the green woods and the mossy banks where he had sat and talked with her the year before, and watched the color deepening on her cheeks, and the coy drooping of her eyelids, as he held her hand in his, or pushed back a stray curl of her hair from her face, or put his arm around her when there was no other support for her back. Katy had thought of this, too, and hated herself for the part she had played in what was more a tragedy, for her, than a comedy to be lightly forgotten. Not for worlds, however, would she let him know that she had given more meaning to that summer idyl than he had done, and after her first show of coldness she was herself again, and laughed and chatted with him as merrily as ever.

At his request she sang for him, and sang, it seemed to her, as she had never sung before. He was not at all a critic, or music-mad in any sense, but he listened in wonder as her rich, full voice filled the house and made him feel hot and cold and faint all at the same time.

"Why, Katy!" he exclaimed, when she was through. "You take a fellow right off his feet. Why don't you go upon the stage? The whole world would ring with your name."

"I am going," Katy replied, as she put up her music, and rose from the stool.

"Never!" Carl exclaimed, so emphatically that Katy looked at him in wonder.

"What have you against the stage?" she asked, and he replied, "Nothing against those who are already there, and among whom, I dare say, there are as many good people in proportion as there are off; but everything against it for you, and when I said you ought to be there I was merely in fun. Standing before the people to be criticised and talked about by the men in the clubs and public places is bad enough, but when you get behind the scenes and see the freedom which must necessarily exist there, and when you come in contact with all classes of men who, because of their talent for acting, or singing, or both, form a part of every company, and with whom you have no choice except to play, *Bah!* I believe I'd rather see you dead than there."

He was worse than Fanny, and Katy felt some of her castles melting into air as he talked, for all the fame she had sometimes dreamed of winning was not worth the loss of Carl's good opinion.

"Perfect yourself in music," he continued, "and sing for your friends; sing in church; sing for charities; sing anywhere except with a troupe. I couldn't bear that. Better send for the minister now. It isn't too late. What do you say?"

He was standing with his hand on her shoulder, looking at her, while she returned his gaze unflinchingly as she replied, "Just what I said this morning. No, thank you. I am not in so great a hurry; and if I were, it would be the mistake of my life and yours. What you do to-day you forget or regret to-morrow, and I have my career to consider."

If Carl had been in the habit of swearing he would have

consigned her *career* to the lower regions, and in his excitement he might have done so now if she had not released herself from him, and swept from the room, leaving him discomfited and uncertain as to whether he had actually proposed and been rejected, and if it were true that what he desired to-day he tired of to-morrow.

"By Jove!" he said to himself. "No girl ever flouted me like that. I know of forty, with their mothers at their backs, who would have gone for the parson themselves and had him here by this time. I guess Virginia girls are different from those of Boston; Katy certainly is. *Career!* Katy on the stage! Katy in tights,—with glasses leveled at her! It might come to that sometime, if she sang in opera. I believe I'd shoot her, or myself, should I live to see the sight. That is Miss Errington's work, but I won't have it, and I'll propose in *bona fide* shape and have the thing settled. Katy is too young, perhaps. She can't be seventeen yet, but I'll wait three years. There's a lot of things I want to do before I settle down into a steady-going married man. But I'll bind Katy and fix that stage business. I wonder if I would get tired of a three years' engagement." On the whole, he concluded that he would, and as he was not quite ready to marry, he decided to wait awhile and keep his eyes on Katy until he saw dangerous signs of her *career*, when he would step in and stop it.

Carl was a curious compound. There was no question that he loved Katy, but he loved his freedom better, and, on the whole, he was glad that after his talk with her of the stage she gave him no chance to see her alone. If she had, her grace and sweetness and beauty would have influenced him so strongly that he might have proposed in earnest, and—"been rejected, I believe upon my soul,"

he reflected, while thinking the matter over after his return to Boston.

Before leaving he had a long talk with Annie with regard to Paul, for whom he had conceived a great liking, and whom he began to think he had neglected. To this thought he was helped by Norah, who, when he asked how long she intended staying at The Elms replied, that she didn't know. Probably not long, as she knew Miss Annie could not afford to keep her.

"I don't think her father left much for his daughters," she said, "and there is Paul to be taken care of, or he may be a cripple. Have you ever thought of that?"

He had not, and he didn't know what she meant. Accustomed all his life to every luxury, he had not given much thought to the wants of others, except as they were presented to him. When asked for a subscription to some charity, as he often was, he gave liberally. When he passed an old half-clothed man or woman on the corner turning a hand-organ, with "I am blind" pinned on the breast, he always dropped a coin into the cup, and would have lavished thousands upon the people of The Elms had it been suggested to him that they needed it.

"I don't believe I am so selfish a cad as I am thoughtless," he said to Annie.

"You see, I have more than I ought to have, and I have given myself to spending it, and forgotten that something was due to others besides charities,—to Paul for instance. He is my half-brother, as well as yours, and I ought never to have let the whole burden fall on you."

"It has been no burden," Annie interposed quickly. "Paul could never be that."

"I don't mean it that way," Carl answered. "I mean that I ought to help, and I'm going to. I shall provide

for his education and settle something upon him at once. And what is this Norah has been telling me about his being a cripple? She talked as if I were a brute."

In the excitement incident upon Fanny's marriage, Annie had for the time being forgotten the fear which had haunted her with regard to Paul, and which came back to her with a shock when Carl asked about it. She told him all she knew, saying, however, that she hoped her fears were groundless, Paul seemed so active and well. Carl's answer was not reassuring.

"I have noticed him limping at times," he said, "and once when I asked him why he did so he replied, 'It hurts me here,' and put his hand on his back. He must have the best medical advice in Richmond, and if that does not answer we must take him to New York, and if that fails, I will take him to Paris. He can be cured there. Don't look so white and scared. There may be nothing serious, and if there is, it can be cured. Suppose you go to Richmond with me and take Paul."

This was on Sunday, and the next day Carl left The Elms, and Annie and Paul went with him as far as Richmond,—the little boy delighted with the first journey he had ever taken in the cars, and Annie's heart full of anxiety as to what the doctor's verdict might be.

Chapter V.—Author's Story Continued.

ON THE CELTIC.

Everything which ingenuity could devise or money buy had been bought and devised for the two staterooms which Col. Errington had engaged upon the Celtic, and between which there was only a narrow passage. In the one which the Colonel called Fanny's boudoir, and where she was to sit when it was too cold to be on deck and she did not care to stay in the saloon, there was a large easy chair and footstool, with soft cushions and pillows on the couch under the window. There was a basket of champagne in one corner, with jars of French prunes, preserved ginger and Albert biscuits in another. There were all the last magazines, with three or four books on the shelves, and on the washstand a basket of exquisite flowers filling the room with perfume. When they came on board the ship the Colonel had only shown Fanny their sleeping-room and had then hurried her to the deck, where they staid until the ship was moving down the bay, across which the November wind blew cold and chill. "Now come and see your parlor," he said, taking her by the arm and leading her to No.—.

It was Fanny's first knowledge of a steamer, but she readily understood how infinitely superior this stateroom was to the others, and that she was indebted to her husband's forethought for it. In the excitement of her hasty marriage there had been no chance for love-making, and her heart was too sore and full of Jack to think of much else. She heard his voice in the din around her as the passengers and their friends crowded the deck, and saw

his face on the wharf, waving her a good-bye as the ship moved away and the objects began to grow dim in the distance.

"Oh, Jack, will you never leave me!" she thought, and her hands clasped each other tightly and the lump in her throat was getting larger than she could master when the Colonel broke the spell and led her to her stateroom.

"How do you like it?" he asked, sitting down upon the couch and watching her as her eyes took in every detail and then filled with tears.

He had asked her to call him George, but she had never done so until now, when there awoke within her a throb of something more than gratitude and less than love, and going up to him she put her arms around his neck and kissed him on his forehead. "Oh, George," she said, "it is lovely, and you were so kind to do it all for me. I thank you, and—and— I am going to be so good, only I must cry now."

She was sobbing like a child, and he let her cry without protest, and held her closely to him and gently smoothed her hair. Skilled in reading faces, he had read hers on the deck and guessed that thoughts of home, and possibly of Jack, were bringing the pallor around her lips, and the wistful look of pain into her eyes. Just how much of Jack was in her thoughts he did not know. She had told him distinctly that she did not love him, and he had said it was not her love he wanted. It was her beauty,—herself,—her person. He had all these, and when she put her arms around his neck and kissed him, calling him George, there swept over him a possibility of what might be in the future, and in that moment he was as near loving her as he ever would be in his life. And because of this love, if it could be called by that name, his jealousy

of Jack and every man who looked at her would be stronger and fiercer and make itself felt at every point. When he thought she had cried enough, he told her so; but her tears, once started, could not be easily stopped, and she kept on until something in his voice and manner, which she could feel but not define, checked them back; and lifting her head from his shoulder she said, "I didn't mean to cry like this, but I couldn't help it. I am thinking of Annie and Katy and Paul."

"Yes, I know; I understand perfectly of what you are thinking, but crying will not help you. Don't do it again. It makes your eyes and nose red, and I want you to look your best for dinner. I must go now and see if the purser has secured our seats at table, as I told him to do. Dry your eyes and let me see a bright face when I return; or, would you prefer to go on deck and wait for me there."

She chose the latter, feeling that, pretty as the state-room was, she should smother in its narrow confines. She wanted air and space in which to breathe, and strangle, if possible, the lump in her throat, which pained her so. Her husband brought her beautiful fur-lined cloak, and fastened it around her neck and tied on her sea hood, which, with its lining of quilted crimson satin was very becoming to her. "There, you look like the pictures of Red Riding Hood," he said, as he passed his arm around her to steady her, and then led her to the deck. Their chairs were still inextricably mixed up with a pile of other chairs, so he found her a sheltered place on the seat near the railing, and throwing a rug across her lap left her alone with the injunction, "Mind you don't cry again."

"No-o," she said, with a sob, like a little child trying to keep down the tears it has been forbidden to shed.

There were many passing and repassing around her,—passengers, sailors and officers of the ship, each one of whom glanced at the lovely face slightly upturned to the cool wind which blew so refreshingly across the burning cheeks. But Fanny saw none of them. Her eyes were with her thoughts, and they were far away in her Virginia home, with Jack, and every incident of her life as connected with him. How vivid it all was to her. The tall boy and the little girl he had carried so often on his back to school when the mud was deep and she was afraid of soiling her shoes and dress;—the candy and sugar hearts and kisses with the mottoes which he had hidden under her desk where she was sure to find them;—the big red apples he gave her at recess, and his championship generally when she needed it, as she frequently did,—for with her quick hot temper she was a good deal of a fighter, and often battled both with the girls and boys. Later on, when he was a grown young man and she a young lady, how tender and true he had always been to her,—loving her with an intensity which she realized now as she had never before. In his last letter to her, received the day before she had decided to break his heart, he had poured out his love like a torrent. "My darling," he wrote at the close, "you do not know how much I love you, or how glad I am that I am so soon to see you. Only a few days more and you will be here, and then in one short month you will be mine. It makes me faint with joy to think of it. I am not half good enough for you, but if love and devotion can make a woman happy, you shall be so, my darling, my queen, my wife that is to be."

She had burned the letter when she said yes to Col. Errington, but the last sentences had stamped themselves upon her memory and came back to her now, each one a

stab as she sat there alone, seeing nothing, hearing nothing, except the regular thud of the machinery, which she knew was every moment taking her farther and farther away from the old life and Jack. Yesterday at this time she was free, and could have withdrawn; now, it was too late. She was bound; she could not go back if she would. Possibly she would not if she could, so contradictory was her nature. A life of wealth and luxury looked very attractive to her still, if she could only have forgotten Jack. But she could not. His face was everywhere. It looked at her from every wave which broke around the boat; from every sail, and every angle on the deck where the dark shadows were gathering as the short November day drew to a close; not happy and buoyant as she had always seen it, but full of anguish, as she knew it would be when her letter reached him. "Oh, Jack, Jack!" she said aloud, as she leaned her head back so that her face was distinctly visible to the man who stood behind her and whose approach she had not heard.

Col. Errington had secured the seats he wanted at the Captain's table,—had met some New York acquaintances, had been congratulated on his marriage, whose haste he had explained as he did to the clergyman, and now he had come to introduce her and take her in to dinner and see what impression she would make upon his friends. It was not particularly pleasant for a bridegroom of less than twenty-four hours to hear his bride repeating the name of his rival as Fanny repeated Jack's, and for a moment the Colonel clenched his fists and ground his teeth together, muttering an oath under his breath. Then,—for he was not all hard,—there came over him a feeling of pity for the girl who had never pretended to love him, and whom he had lured from her allegiance to another

man by every art and argument of which he was capable.

"I shall not stand much of this, but for once I don't mind," he thought, and his voice was very pleasant as he said to her, "Fanny, Fanny, have you been asleep?"

"No, no," she answered quickly, starting up from her reclining position,—her face, which had looked so pale, flushing to the color of the crimson satin lining of her hood; "why did you think me asleep?"

"You were talking aloud; better not give your thoughts to the winds again," he replied, rather significantly; then added, "dinner is ready and I have come for you. Your seat is next to the Captain, and some of my friends are at the same table. I want to present them to you. That hood is very becoming to you, but you'd better not wear it to the table. Give a brush or two to your hair and you are all right."

They were in their stateroom now and Fanny was divesting herself of her cloak and hood and giving the few touches to her hair which her husband had suggested. Her gown of navy blue which Jack's money had bought fitted her fine figure admirably; the color had come back to her cheeks and the sparkle to her eyes, and the Colonel was very proud of her as he lead her into the dining-room and presented her to the Captain and those of his friends whose seats were near his own. Gossip on a ship spreads rapidly, and it had been rumored about so soon that she was the bride of the elderly man who was so attentive to her. Also, that there was a romance of some kind connected with the marriage, and many eyes were directed to her as she took her seat at the table, with the Captain on her left and her husband on her right. She knew she was attracting attention, and her spirits began to rise as she talked with the Captain and those near her to whom

she had been introduced. In front of her was a large bouquet of roses, with a card attached to it bearing her name; near it was a basket of cut flowers, also bearing her name, both ordered by the Colonel. In her ignorance of ship usages she fancied they might be from the Captain, who was so attentive to her, or some other friend of her husband's, and she felt almost happy as she buried her face in the lovely roses, which seemed to add a soft sweetness to her brilliant beauty.

When dinner was over she went with her husband for a walk upon the deck until the cold drove them to the saloon, where she was soon the center of interest to the Colonel's New York friends, who vied with each other in paying her attention. Matters were not so bad after all, and it was a pretty good thing to be the bride of a man as rich and well known as Col. Errington. Jack and The Elms and Annie and Katy and Paul began to grow misty and far away from this gay company of polished city people. But they came back to her when, at a late hour, the party broke up and the Colonel said he must have a cigar before retiring; but he conducted Fanny to the door of her stateroom, and telling her he should not be gone long left her alone with her wretched thoughts, which, as if to make amends for the respite they had given her, came swarming into her mind with redoubled force. The stateroom lost its prettiness; the roaring of the sea reminded her of the wintry wind as it sometimes howled through the woods and around the house at home when a wild storm was sweeping over Lovering, and, worse than all, Jack's eyes were looking at her again from her wedding ring and the superb solitaire which guarded it, to the gown his money had paid for and which she was removing.

"Oh! Jack, Jack,—will your eyes haunt me always?"

She whispered, wringing her hands so hard that the diamond cut into her flesh.

Fanny could scarcely be called a religious person, but every night of her life since she could remember, except her bridal night, she had said the Lord's Prayer, either with Annie, or Katy, or Paul, and now from force of habit she knelt by her berth, which reminded her of a cupboard shelf, and began the familiar words. Her voice was choked with sobs, and when she reached "Forgive us our trespasses," she said instead, "Forgive what I have done, and take Jack's eyes away, or I shall die." Once in her berth, which was as comfortable as a berth on a ship can ever be, Jack's eyes ceased to haunt her, and she might have fallen asleep if she had not heard her husband's step near the door. "I can't speak to him to-night," she thought, with a shiver, and closing her eyes she feigned sleep so successfully that when, as he called her name and she did not answer, he cautiously parted the curtains and looked at her, he believed her asleep, she lay so still, with her hands folded across her breast. Jack would have kissed her at the risk of waking her. The Colonel only thought how fair she was and that her beauty was his own, as he dropped the curtain and went to his couch under the window, where he was soon sleeping as soundly as if outside the wind was not rising until it blew a gale, while the steamer rolled and pitched in a manner well calculated to terrify one not accustomed to the sea.

For awhile Fanny listened to the roar outside and to the noise overhead as the sailors hurried to and fro. At last when she could bear it no longer, she called to her husband, "George, George, I am so frightened. Are we in danger? Do ships ever tip over?"

"Tip over! No. There is no danger. It is only a

little spurt of wind. It will soon pass. Go to sleep, child," the Colonel answered drowsily, and his sonorous breathing soon filled the room again.

Fanny could not sleep, and as the wind increased and the ship rolled more and more she decided that if she must drown it should be with her clothing on. She got out of her berth and steadying herself by it reached up for her dress which she had hung upon a hook and which was swinging out in straight lines, with everything else which could swing. Heretofore she had only been afraid. Now, however, she was suddenly conscious of a new sensation so overmastering that she crept back into her berth, wondering if she were dying, as the cold, clammy feeling crept from her toes up to the roots of her hair, which seemed in her nervous imagination to stand on end. As yet there was no other feeling in her stomach than one of faintness and chill,—but when she raised her head the nausea was so severe that the Colonel was roused from his sleep and came at once to her aid.

"Am I dying?" she asked, and he answered with a laugh, "Dying! No. It's only seasickness. You will soon be over it."

All night the retching and nausea continued, and when the grey dawn came struggling through the porthole Fanny was as limp and white and still as if she were dead.

The Colonel had called the doctor and stewardess when his remedies failed, and they had removed her from the berth to the couch under the window where she would have more air and light. And there she lay, motionless, for if she stirred so much as a finger or turned her head the terrible paroxysm seized and shook her until there was scarcely strength in her to move. It was the worst case he had ever seen, the doctor said, as

the day wore on and she did not improve. He had said this a good many times when he knew his patients wished to be exceptions, but he meant it now, and became greatly interested in the young bride, who puzzled him somewhat. As the seasickness decreased it was succeeded by a severe pain in the head, with a burning fever, so that at times she was delirious, and said things the Colonel would have given much if she had left unsaid. Jack troubled her, or rather his eyes, which were always looking at her. Many eyes he must have had, as they were everywhere, and especially upon the wedding ring and the solitaire. Here they blinded her if her hand lay outside the sheet. If she covered it up, she saw them still;—not as distinctly, but saw them looking at her, sometimes mockingly, but oftener reproachfully and full of pain.

"Jack, Jack, go away!" she would say imploringly, and once, when the Colonel was standing by her, she slipped the rings from her finger and handing them to him said, "His eyes are on them all the time. Take them away, and perhaps I shan't see them so often."

The Colonel took the rings and put them in his vest pocket, with a feeling that he was beginning to reap in some small measure what he had sown. It did not take long for his friends to know about the mysterious Jack whose eyes haunted his wife, and one lady, bolder and more curious than the others, asked him, "Who is Jack? Her brother?"

"He is not her brother," was the curt reply, and the gleam in the Colonel's eyes warned the lady not to pursue the subject.

"Curse him!" the Colonel said to himself, as he went up on deck and in the face of a fierce north-easter walked back

and forth for half an hour or more, his hands in his pockets and his head bent down as if to break the force of the wind which beat so furiously upon him, but which he didn't feel at all.

A hurricane would scarcely have moved him, so bitter were his thoughts and so deeply wounded his pride. He knew the ways of a ship and how the passengers, shut up within themselves, hailed anything like gossip and made the most of it, and he knew they were discussing his affairs and building up theories with regard to the Jack whose eyes sat on his wife's pillow,—on the door,—on the window,—and lastly on her wedding ring, which she had discarded. A few had been in to see her and what they had not heard the stewardess had told, and every possible conclusion was drawn with regard to the matter. All this he guessed as he walked the deck cursing his rival, who, far away, was seeing Fanny's face just as she saw his, for this was on Tuesday night, when Jack was at his worst.

"Curse him, and her, too, for loving a poor country fellow like that in preference to *me*," the Colonel said, and the emphasis on the *me* told how infinitely superior he though himself to Jack Fullerton and people like him.

Accustomed all his life to deference and preference on account of his wealth and family and distinguished appearance, he could not understand how a man like Jack should be preferred to himself. In love in its purest, truest sense, he did not believe. It was a vealy sensation at its best, fit only for the very young. Mature people knew better than to indulge in it. The happiest marriages were marriages of convenience or advancement, where for value received an equivalent was paid and the bargain a fair one.

That he had not married before was his own fault. There was scarcely a young woman of his acquaintance,

either in Washington or New York, who would not have thought twice before refusing Col. Errington, and he knew it. Had it not been for his sister's presence in his household he might perhaps have married earlier, but aside from their little disagreements she had made him so comfortable that he had never seriously considered matrimony until little Fanny Hathern stood up so fearlessly and scorned him to his face with all his troops behind him. He had never forgotten her, and had always cherished a vague belief that she would some day be his wife. When at last he made up his mind in earnest, he resolved that nothing should stand in his way. He never asked himself if he loved her. She would make a fine centre for his surroundings. She was bright and spirited and beautiful and he wanted her, and had won her against the odds of another suitor to whom she was pledged, and her wedding day only a month in the distance. For Jack and what he might feel he did not care at all. He was a man and would get over it, and possibly marry the other twin,—the little brown-eyed woman whom he scarcely remembered, except that she was small and quiet and gentle and far better suited to Jack than Fanny with her piquancy and dash. It had been a fair bargain, he thought; money and position *versus* youth and beauty. He meant to fulfill his part and give her everything his wife ought to have. Why shouldn't she fulfill her part, too, and be satisfied? Why should she hanker so after that fellow, calling his name as he heard her call it on the deck,—talking of him continually in her delirium,—seeing his eyes everywhere until he himself began to have a creepy feeling and see them, too. He had been as near loving her as he could love any one when she kissed him in their stateroom and called him George, and that increased his anger. Jeal-

ousy and mortified pride were torturing him about equally as he strode on in the face of the wind, which increased more and more, until a sudden lurch of the ship sent him into the midst of a pile of chairs and brought his walk to a close.

With what sounded like an oath he struggled to his feet and descended to the saloon, where a number of his friends were sitting, mostly ladies, and all discussing the mysterious Jack. He did not hear a word they said, but he knew at a glance the purport of their conversation, and a hot, angry flash showed on his face for a moment. Then, on the instant, he became his olden self,—the easy, courteous gentleman,—and when his wife's illness was alluded to, he spoke of her with great concern and apparent affection.

The world should never know by any act of his of the rage in his heart when he thought of Jack. Outwardly he would be the most devoted of husbands, paying Fanny every possible attention. Alone with her, when the world could not take note;—— Well, he hadn't made up his mind what he would do if this nonsense continued. The past could not be helped, and she was not responsible for the secret she had betrayed to so many, but in the future it must be different.

When at last he went to his stateroom he found her lying much as she did that first night when she feigned sleep that he might not speak to her. She was not feigning now. Her breath was regular and natural, and there was a faint color in her cheeks which had grown thinner within the last few days. Her hands were folded on her breast as they had been that first night and he noticed more than he had ever done before how white and small they were, and noted, too, with a pang, the absence of the wedding ring still reposing in his vest pocket. When would she

wear it again? Would she ask for it, or would he have to offer it to her?

"Never! I'll be——first," he said aloud, with so much vehemence that Fanny stirred in her sleep,—moved her head a little, and with a smile said, "What did you say, Jack?"

"I am not Jack. I'm your husband," he answered savagely, and in a moment Fanny's eyes opened and looked at him questioningly. Then she said, "Oh, George, is it you? I dreamed I was at home and somebody was swearing."

"I know you were dreaming of home," he replied, which made Fanny's eyes open wider and shine with a kind of reddish light, as they often did when she was surprised and perplexed.

Was he angry, and why? and had she talked in her sleep? She didn't know, and she continued to look at him so appealingly, that he felt his wrath giving way and a sensation of something like pity taking its place.

"You are better," he said, and sitting down beside her told her whatever he thought would interest her and that they were not very far from Queenstown. "I shall cable from there to my sister, who, I suppose, is at The Elms," he said.

"What day is it?" Fanny asked, and he replied, "Sunday. We ought to be at Queenstown this afternoon, but the rough weather has kept us back. We shall see Ireland to-morrow."

"Sunday;—yes;" Fanny said, remembering that everything was known in Lovering by this time, and wondering how Jack took it.

The seasickness and fever were gone. She was only weak from their effects, but quite herself mentally. She

knew that she had dreamed of home and Jack, and wondered if she had talked of him, but dared not ask. Lifting up her hand to push her hair from her forehead she noticed the absence of her rings, and looking at the Colonel with a smile she extended the ringless hand to him and asked, "Where are they? I seem to remember something about their worrying me. Did I take them off?"

"Yes; you said there were eyes in them looking at you all the time. They are here. Do you want them again?" he replied, and held them up before her.

"Why, yes," she said. "Of course I want them. How it would look for me to be passing as your wife with no wedding ring; put it on, please."

It does not take much to soothe a man if he cares at all for a woman, and in a way the Colonel did care for Fanny very much, and the touch of her hand on his and the light which shone in her beautiful eyes fired the flame again, and he held her hand for a moment before he put the rings in their place; then, stooping over her, he kissed her on her forehead.

The next day they reached Queenstown and a cablegram that they were safe was sent to The Elms. Once he thought to stop at Queenstown and make the remainder of the journey overland; but Fanny was very comfortable now; the sea was comparatively calm and they kept on to Liverpool, which they reached the eleventh day out from New York. He would like to have gone directly to London, but Fanny was too utterly exhausted to allow of it. She was almost as helpless as a little child, and a porter carried her in his arms to the carriage in which she was driven to the North Western Hotel. Here two or three days were spent until her strength came back and she could walk across the room without a feeling that the floor

was rising up to meet her. It was Saturday before she was quite equal to the journey. Then, securing a first class compartment all to himself, the Colonel started on the second stage of his rather stormy honeymoon.

Chapter VI.

ON THE ROAD TO LONDON.

He was very attentive to Fanny during the rapid journey from Liverpool to London. Fearful lest she should take cold, as the day was raw and misty, he wrapped her fur-lined cloak around her,—made her put her feet upon the hot water jugs,—gave her the whole of one side of the compartment, himself taking the other, although he detested riding backwards. Removing the arms of the seats on her side he arranged the rugs and pillows so she could lie down when she was tired. Then, seating himself in his corner opposite, he unfolded his newspaper, pretending to read although he really was for the most of the time furtively watching his wife and wondering of what she was thinking, and if all the luxury and comfort with which he tried to surround her were as nothing when compared to the lover she had given up for him. When they entered the carriage she had sunk down wearily into the softly cushioned seat,—had thanked him with a bright smile for his care, and then looked out upon the people hurrying up and down the platform in quest of places, and wondering a little who would come in with them and why they didn't come. Once the anxious face of a young English girl looked in at the window and in a relieved voice called out, "Here mam-ma; here are plenty of seats." But the

door did not yield to her touch. It was locked and the Colonel's quiet "Engaged for an invalid," sent her on down the long line of carriages destined for the St. Pancras Station in London. The English girl was followed by a tall, strikingly handsome woman of twenty-eight or thirty, wrapped in rich furs, and accompanied by a little withered old man, who was talking French and gesticulating wildly with both hands. As the lady was the taller of the two, it was she who glanced in at the window, with the question "*Ya t'il des places ici,—oui, oui,*" and she pulled at the handle of the door. "*Mon Dieu,*" was her next exclamation, but whether elicited by the unyielding door and the Colonel's "Engaged, madame," or Fanny's face, on which her great black eyes rested for a moment as if fascinated, was uncertain.

She moved on and the little old man waddled after her, while Fanny put her head from the window to look again at the woman whose face had struck her as one she had seen before.

It was not possible, though, as she had never known a real French woman, such as this unquestionably was.

"Why is the door fastened, keeping everybody out?" she asked, and the Colonel replied, "I don't care to travel with Tom, Dick and Harry. I have engaged the whole compartment."

That one could do this was new to Fanny, and she sank back into her seat with a feeling of dismay at the prospect of being shut up alone with her husband for three or four hours. She was beginning to be a little afraid of him. Not for anything he had done, but for something in the tone of his voice and the expression of his eyes, which seemed to be looking at her constantly until they made her almost as nervous as Jack's had done when she was ill.

When the train left the station and the Colonel resumed his paper she felt relieved, and began to look with curiosity and interest upon the lanes and hedges and gardens and houses they were passing so rapidly, and which, under the wintry sky, had none of the freshness and greenness she had associated with England. Gradually she became conscious that, instead of reading, her husband was watching her over the top of his paper, with something hard and cruel in his eyes which she could not understand. She knew nothing of what she had said in her delirium, or how bare she had laid her love and longing for Jack, and did not dream of the fierce jealousy and hatred of his rival filling her husband's mind and making him see *Jack* written all over her face just as she had seen his eyes everywhere when the fever was upon her. At last, tired of the dreary landscape, and more tired of the scrutiny she could not fathom, she lay down among the cushions and rugs and fell into a dreamless sleep from which she did not fully rouse until they were entering the suburbs of London. Once, when they were stopping at a large town she was conscious that her husband said "Engaged" to some one, and of hearing the hum of disappointed voices outside. Again, she knew that a rug was thrown over her, and a window shade adjusted so as to shield her from any cold air which might find its way to her. He was certainly kind and she felt grateful for it, and when at last she was fully awake and sitting up, she gave him a smile so bright and beaming that he felt his pulse quicken, and the blue demons which had taken possession of him were less blue and tantalizing.

"I have had a splendid sleep. Where are we now?" she said, pushing the curtain away from the window which was covered with dirty splashes of rain.

"In London,' he replied, and Fanny became alert and interested in a moment.

To see London had been the dream of her life and one she had never expected to be realized. Now, she was here, and the outlook was dreary enough, with the yellow fog hanging low over the city,—the gas jets dimly shining through it,—the pools of water in the streets,—and the dirty streams mixed with coal dust and cinders falling from the roofs of the houses. All her old home-sickness came back, and she felt utterly desolate and as if she wanted to be near someone. Taking her seat by her husband and leaning her head on his shoulder she said, "Oh, George, this is dreadful. London is ten times worse than New York ever thought of being."

"It is a deuced nasty day, but it will not always be foggy," he replied, as he busied himself with getting his bags and bundles together.

"No, it will not always be foggy, nor shall I always feel as I do now," Fanny thought, and the natural hopefulness of her nature began to assert itself.

She was quite cheerful by the time the train ran into the St. Pancras Station and began to unload its passengers.

As she alighted from the carriage she ran against and nearly knocked down the little Frenchman, who was evidently trying to soothe and quiet his wife, if she were his wife. Her back was towards Fanny, who saw only the outline of her figure, and the coils of yellow hair under her hat. She was talking loudly and evidently greatly enraged, but as she spoke in French Fanny could not understand her. There was no more doubt that she was a virago than there was that the little man was the most patient and henpecked husband in the world. In response to Fanny's, "I beg your pardon, sir" as she ran

against him, he took off his hat and said in broken English, "I you ask pardon, too, mademoiselle, to be so in your way."

Then turning towards the lady, "Madame quite—*fache*; madame, you see,—*voiture*, so full *des Americaines, et des enfants.*"

At the sound of his voice, madame turned and Fanny met again the great black, flashing eyes, with dark rings under them and a dusky look generally, such as brush and pencil and belladonna give to eyes where art has been at work. They were, however, quickly withdrawn, as if the lady were ashamed that she had been heard, and while Fanny, puzzled again, was trying to think if she could ever have seen those eyes before, she hurried away with the little man following her.

"Were they quarreling?" Fanny asked, and the Colonel, who understood French perfectly, replied, "I think she was angry because the compartment she was in was full of children and Americans, whom she evidently does not like."

"Oh," Fanny said, "you ought to have let her in with us. She interests me somehow, and the old gentleman is lovely. I reckon it is good pious work to live with Madame. I think he crossed himself once when she was blowing him. See, there they are now," and she pointed to the couple entering a hansom at no great distance from them.

The lady was giving directions to the driver, who bowed assent, closed the little trap door and drove away. Calling another hansom the Colonel bade the man take them to Morley's Hotel. It is a long way from St. Pancras to Morley's, and before the hotel was reached all the street lamps were lighted, looking like so many tapers in the

thick fog which had settled everywhere and was almost as penetrating as rain. Damp to her skin, tired and cold and homesick, Fanny was driven along the gloomy streets, which seemed interminable.

"We shall soon be there now," the Colonel said, as he saw how she drooped, and felt her leaning against him.

A few moments later they turned into Trafalgar Square and she heard the splash of the fountains and saw dimly the outlines of the huge lions guarding the place.

"Here we are," the Colonel said, as they drew up before the hotel, from the windows of which cheerful lights were gleaming, while two or three lackeys in uniform came hurrying out to meet them.

Chapter VII.—Author's Story Continued.

AT MORLEY'S.

The Colonel had telegraphed for a suite of rooms on the second floor looking out upon the Square, and he found them ready for him. A cheerful fire in the salon, another in the bedroom, with every candle lighted in the chandelier and in the candelabra upon the mantle. Divesting herself quickly of her wet wrappings Fanny took an easy chair before the fire, towards which she held her cold hands, while she said, "This is delightful; the rooms are lovely, and I am so glad to be here."

For a time she was glad. Jack and the old life had nothing to offer like this luxurious apartment, with the warmth and the light, and a little later on the waiter asking when Madame would have dinner served.

"Now,—at once," the Colonel answered for her, saying,

when the man had gone, "We dine in here. I have no fancy for *table d'hotes* with all the canaille and bourgeois round me. One can't be too careful in Europe as to his acquaintances."

Fanny, who was very social in her nature and liked to see people, preferred, as a rule, to mingle with them, but to-night she was so tired that she was glad to dine by themselves, and she felt a thrill of satisfaction that she was able to do so without counting the cost. Once, when quite a young girl, she had gone to the Spotswood in Richmond, with her father, who was not feeling well and to whom she had suggested that he have his dinner in his room.

"No, daughter; there would be an extra charge and I cannot afford it," he had said.

She was very poor then;—she was rich now, and need not mind expense. It was a good thing to be rich, and she felt glad and content as she nestled down in the easy chair and felt its soft folds about her and the glow of the fire on her face and watched the two waiters laying the table for dinner, with cut glass and silver and the finest of linen, and a vase of flowers in the centre.

"If father were only here to share it with me," she thought, recalling the many straits to which poverty had reduced them. "If he could share it with me,—or Annie,—or Katy,—or—Jack!"

The last name sent her blood rushing so hotly through her veins that she moved away from the fire as if it scorched her. She did not mean to be disloyal to her husband, and it did not occur to her that she was as she began to wonder how she should feel if it were Jack whom she heard stepping around so briskly in the dressing-room, making himself ready for dinner. She could see just how

he would look lounging easily up to her with a smile on his face and in his laughing eyes which had never rested upon her except with love and tenderness. It was not Jack, but a tall, stern, dignified man, who emerged from the dressing-room just as the soup was put upon the table, and led her to her seat. The dinner was excellent and well served, and Fanny, who was hungry for the first time since her marriage, enjoyed it with a keen relish of a healthy appetite. She was young and hopeful and elastic in her temperament, and as her spirits rose she laughed and joked until her face, which had lost something of its freshness during her illness, grew bright and sparkling, and her husband thought with pride how beautiful she was and almost forgave her for the *eyes* which had troubled her so on shipboard. They had gone through all the courses and the black coffee had been brought in. This the Colonel took by the fire, while Fanny still sat at the table sipping hers and occasionally tasting a Hamburg grape. The waiter had just gone out when there was a knock at the door and a servant entered bringing a cablegram upon a silver salver. It came several days ago, he said, and the clerk at the office had forgotten to give it to the gentleman when he registered.

Naturally the Colonel put out his hand to take it when the waiter said quietly, "If you please, it is for the lady."

"For me!" Fanny exclaimed in surprise. "Who can have telegraphed to me?"

Taking the message in her hand she read the address aloud:—"Mrs. Geo. W. Errington, Morley's Hotel, London, Eng."

It was the first time she had seen her new name in writing, and it gave her a peculiar sensation as she studied it for a moment.

"It's a cablegram from home and may have bad news. Open it," the Colonel said, and instantly Fanny's fingers were tearing at the envelope and she was reading the message: "The Elms, Thanksgiving morning. To Mrs. G. W. Errington. Mr. Fullerton is here and very ill with brain fever. Recovery doubtful. C. Errington."

For a moment everything in the room swam before Fanny's eyes, but she neither spoke nor stirred until the Colonel, alarmed at the whiteness of her face, came to her side and asked "What is it?" She gave him the cablegram which he read aloud and then said, "That's bad. A fever is likely to go hard with a man of Mr. Fullerton's temperament."

The next moment he repented his words, calling himself a brute, partly for his thoughtlessness and more for the vindictive feeling which had prompted it.

"Oh, Jack! I have killed you," Fanny cried, stretching out her hands, and then lying back in her chair in a dead faint, the first she had ever had in her life.

It was one thing to give Jack up voluntarily, and know that somewhere in the world he was still alive, remembering and loving her, as she believed he would, and another thing to think of him as dead,—gone out of her life forever,—murdered by her. That was the way she put it, and murderess was the word in her mind when she cried out, "Oh, Jack, I have killed you." She had no doubt as to the cause of his illness. He had received her letter, enclosed in Annie's, and been stricken down at once in the old home where he had expected to make her his wife and where both Miss Errington and Katy were now. When Thanksgiving came on the *Celtic* she was too ill to know or care what day it was, and she had not thought of it since. But she remembered now all the bright antici-

pations of that day of which both Annie and Jack had written to her,—the dinner they were to have and for which Phyllis was making so great preparations, and after dinner the walk or drive to "Our house on The Plateau." This last was the burden of Jack's letter to her, and now she was another man's wife, and Jack was dying, or dead. All her work, and she was as surely a murderess as if with her hand she had killed him. It takes some time to tell all this, but it scarcely took Fanny a second to think it, so rapid were her thoughts and conclusions before she became unconscious. The Colonel had seen death in many phases on the battle-field, but no face had ever affected him like this, which was so still and white with a grieved expression around the mouth pitiful to see. He was glad he was alone with her, and when he heard the servant coming to clear the table he called to him to wait until he got Madame to her room, as she was ill. Taking her in his arms he carried her to their sleeping-room, loosened her dress, laid her upon the bed, and then applied every restorative which came to his mind, water, cologne, camphor, bay rum and ammonia, with no effect whatever for a time, and he began to wonder if it were possible for her to die upon his hands. At last, however, after what seemed to him an interminable length of time, she recovered and asked in some surprise what had happened, and why her hair and dress were so wet and why she was on the bed.

"You had a cablegram and fainted," the Colonel explained, and then it came to her.

"Yes, I know," she said, with a sob. "Jack is dead, and I killed him."

"Humbug!" the Colonel answered, sternly. "He is not dead. If he were my sister would have cabled again.

This message was sent several days ago. Brain fever runs its course quickly. He is better by this time. Don't make another scene. Restrain yourself. I am not fond of high tragedy, especially when the hero is another man. I have had enough of it."

Fanny had never heard him speak like this, and her heart stood still a moment and her breath came in short gasps, as she watched him putting the bottles of camphor and cologne and bay rum in their places and saw how pale he was and how his hands trembled. Something like pity for him was in her heart, but a stronger feeling overmastered it. She must know if Jack were living.

"George," she said, her voice compelling him to go to her against his will. "George," she continued, looking up at him with eyes which held his, much as he wished to withdraw them, "I am sorry for it all, but I must know if Jack is alive, and you must cable to your sister to-night, if possible,—to-morrow, sure."

Mentally the Colonel swore he wouldn't, but Fanny's face conquered, and the message "How is Jack?" which his sister received was sent by him with Fanny's name appended. The next two days were not very merry ones to either the Colonel or Fanny. *She* sat silent and shivered by the fire, counting the hours as they went by, and every time there was a knock at the door starting up in hopes that the word which meant life or death had come. *He* spent many hours in the smoking and reading room trying to divert his mind from what weighed upon him almost as heavily as it did upon Fanny. Again, he took long walks through the damp and fog, cursing his folly in marrying a girl who loved another as he now knew Fanny loved Jack, and trying to arrange his future. She was his wife. Nothing could undo that, and he did not know that

he wanted it undone. He could still be very proud of her, if she would behave herself and not go pining and puling after another man, and this she should do. He was resolved upon that. Whether Jack lived or died she was to seem to forget him and be loyal to himself outwardly, whatever she might feel. She had married him for money. She should have it in full measure, and return to him an equivalent in obedience to his will. No one had ever thwarted that with impunity, and his wife should not be the first to do it. It seemed to him he had walked over nearly half of London when he came to this conclusion and began to feel that he was tired. Hailing a hansom he was driven to the hotel where he found his sister's second cablegram, which he took at once to his wife. She was sitting just as he had left her hours before, wrapped in a shawl before the fire, with a hopeless look upon her face, which made him angry, and also sorry for her as he handed her the envelope and watched her as she tore it open and read, "He is better."

He had never dreamed that a face could change as hers did in an instant.

"George, George," she exclaimed. "He is better; he will live; and I am not a murderess. I am so glad; so glad."

She was not chilly now. The shawl was thrown aside, and it was her own suggestion that they should dine below with the other guests rather than in their private salon as they had done heretofore.

"Now that I do not feel the mark of Cain on my forehead I want to see people. I have been mewed up here long enough," she said; and the Colonel assented, although in his present state of mind he cared little where he took his dinner.

He asked for a table apart by himself and to it he conducted his wife, whose grace and beauty could not fail to attract attention, and who talked with him as airily as if there were no sore spot in her heart which would never quite cease to throb with a dull pain when memory's fingers touched it. At some little distance from them, at a table by themselves, sat the Frenchman and his wife, the little man bowing and throwing out his hand very politely to Fanny, while saying something to the lady whose back was to them, and who never moved from her rather stiff position. She was elaborately and elegantly attired, evidently for the opera. Her dress, V-shaped before and behind, showed a part of her white, plump neck, on which a few short golden curls were falling from the coil arranged above them.

"Look, George; there's the little old man and his wife; I wonder who they are," Fanny said, and the Colonel replied, "They are registered 'Monsieur and Madame Felix, Paris.' The clerk says they come here often and that he is very rich. I imagine she is a terror, as I overheard her giving him Hail Columbia for something. I couldn't tell what, but fancied it was about *you*, and that he either wanted her to call at our door and inquire, or send you some flowers. He remembered seeing you at the station and had taken the great liberty, he called it, to ask for you, and seemed concerned when I told him that you were not well and were keeping your room. She affects a great deal of hauteur and reserve, but is a magnificent looking woman,—very Frenchy, with her dark eyes and yellow hair. I thought at first it might be a wig, but it isn't; it is all her own, growing on her head. I had a glimpse of her in the hall one day, hurrying to her room, in a crimson silk dressing gown, with all that hair

hanging down her back below her waist. She knew I saw her and actually smiled upon me, showing a set of very white, even teeth and a pair of brilliant eyes."

Cold and passionless as the Colonel seemed he never saw a beautiful woman that he did not at once take in every point of her beauty from her head to her feet, and as the French lady, who had excited Fanny's curiosity, was beautiful, or certainly very attractive, he waxed so eloquent over her that some women might have been jealous. But Fanny scarcely heard him. She was thinking of the cablegram which had relieved her anxiety for Jack, and of the long letter she meant to write to Annie that night. The Colonel was going to the opera and had asked her to accompany him, but she did not feel quite strong enough. So he left her alone and she began her letter, telling of her fearful seasickness and homesickness, and her remorse and pain when she received the news that Jack was dangerously ill; struck down, she was sure, by her act.

"If he had died I should never have known another moment's peace of mind, for I should have known I was the cause of his death," she wrote. "But, thank God he is better, and there has been a little song of joy in my heart ever since I heard it. The world could never be the same to me with Jack gone from it."

As she began to feel tired she did not finish the letter, but left it open on the writing desk, intending to finish it in the morning. She did not hear her husband when he came in, nor knew that her letter had caught his eye at once, with Jack's name occurring so often on the page open in view that he had stopped and unconsciously at first read a few lines. Ordinarily he would have held another's letter sacred, but now with his anger and jealousy

aroused he took up this and read it with wrath and disgust. The next morning when Fanny awoke she found her husband up and dressed and standing by the bedside looking at her. Opening her eyes drowsily, and smiling up at him, she said, "Have I overslept? What time is it, please?"

He did not answer her, but instead held up her letter which he had read again with more bitterness than on the previous night.

"Fanny," he began, and his voice was full of concentrated anger and determination, "this nonsense must be stopped. I have had enough of it. You are my wife. I cannot control your thoughts, but I can your actions, and I will not have you writing home such sentimental trash as this about seasickness and homesickness, as if you were the most wretched woman in the world. If you were so fond of Jack, why under Heavens did you take *me*,—and having taken me why do you prove faithless to your marriage vows by clinging so to *him*. This letter will *not* go for my sister or your adorable Jack to exult over, saying we are both reaping our just deserts."

He tore the letter in shreds, which he threw into the fire. For a moment Fanny was speechless, then all her spirit and temper rose and her eyes were like two volcanoes, emitting spits of flame, as she said, "Do you call yourself a gentleman, and is it usual for gentlemen to read their wives' letters as you have read mine?"

The taunt stung him, but he would not apologize, although he winced under the blaze of her eyes and the lash of her tongue. For a moment he let her have her own way and say what she chose; then buckled on his armor, which she could no more resist than she could strike her head against a wall hoping to move it. The fire in her black eyes was more than matched by the steely hard-

ness of his, as he met her impetuous reproaches with words spoken very slowly and very low, but which left her vanquished and him master of the field and of her. It was a terrible battle, southern fire against northern coolness, and the latter conquered. Henceforth Fanny would go when he told her to go, come when he told her to come, do what he bade her do.

"But thank God I can *think* what I please and of whom I please, and you cannot help yourself," was her last defiant fling, as she dressed herself hurriedly and sat down to the breakfast which was served in their parlor and had waited some time while the matrimonial difference was settled.

Hot as was Fanny's temper there was nothing sullen or vindictive in her nature, while the Colonel prided himself upon never striking a superfluous blow after the nail was driven in. If he was fierce in war he could be generous in peace, and if the waiter who served them that morning had been questioned upon the subject, he would have reported them as examples of conjugal harmony and affection. Madame, he might have said, was rather quiet, with a bright red spot on either cheek, while *Milor* was very attentive to her, urging her to eat, and planning where he was to take her that day. First, shopping. He had met several friends the night before, both English and American, all of whom were coming to call.. He had an invitation to dinner the next day but one at the house of an English lady, who had spent a part of a winter in Washington and been entertained by him and his sister. She had just heard he was in London and hoped he would accept her invitation, if it were rather late to give it. He also had tickets to hear Patti, and was to occupy a box with Lady *Hyer*, an American, who had married an earl.

This necessitated a suitable outfit, and all the morning was spent at Marshall & Snelgrove's and Peter Robinson's, deep in the mysteries of silks and velvets and laces, as shown and recommended by the saleswoman and pronounced upon by the Colonel, who proved a connoisseur in matters of dress, and without really seeming to do so decided on every purchased article. Surrounded by so much elegance and receiving so much attention and deference, Fanny's spirits rose. The scene of the morning, though rankling a little, was partially forgotten in the glamour of the dinner and evening dresses which were finally decided upon and were very becoming to her. The corsage of both was high, notwithstanding that the saleswoman had pleaded for something different.

"Madam's neck was so white and smooth that it was a pity to cover it even with lace," she said, while Fanny's choice was the same as hers, but that did not matter. The Colonel knew her neck was smooth and fair, but it was for him only. No other man should look upon it, and he vetoed the low necks, but yielded to the short sleeves, which would only leave bare her arms, over which the saleswoman went into ecstasies.

All that evening and a part of the next day boxes of dry goods of various kinds kept coming to the Colonel's apartments, which looked like some gay bazaar with Fanny in the midst, excited and seemingly happy and oblivious of all that had gone before, except occasionally when a sigh, or a sudden pressure of her hand upon her heart told that she remembered and was exercising her right to think her own thoughts untrammeled by anyone. The Colonel was very suave and gracious, enjoying her enthusiasm and smiling upon her as upon a wayward but conquered child. On the night of the dinner party, as she

stood before him, radiant and lovely, and asked what he thought of her, he answered, "I think you will be the most beautiful woman there, after I have made a few additions to your toilet. Look here," and pulling her down beside him, he laid in her lap a pair of exquisite diamond earrings, the stones large and white and clear, and showing their value by their brilliancy and depth. He fastened them in her ears himself, and then clasped around her wrists a pair of superb bracelets, scarcely less expensive than the diamonds.

"Oh, George," she said, as she stood up and saw in the mirror the flash of the precious stones which enhanced her beauty, "Oh, George, you are kind, and I thank you so much, and I mean to be good."

The last words were spoken with a half sob as she put her arms around his neck. She didn't kiss him. The memory of the bitter words he had said to her was too fresh in her mind for that. But she was grateful and pleased, and as the Colonel had predicted, she was by far the most beautiful woman in Mrs. Harcourt's drawing room and received the most attention. There was nothing like *gaucherie* in Fanny's manner. She conformed readily to the atmosphere around her, and the English, usually so critical where Americans are concerned, forget to criticise and found her wholly charming and let her know they did. Never in her life had she been so flattered and admired, and never had she been more sparkling and said brighter, wittier things in a ladylike way than now. She had found her place in society at last; the one she had dreamed of but never thought to attain, and for the time she was happy, drinking the brimming cup, and the past was blotted out. She had often said to herself, "It is good to be rich and somebody," and she said it now

with great unction as the people crowded around her and vied with each other in paying her homage. Among them was Lady Hyer, who, proud of her countrywoman, invited her with her husband to spend the Christmas holidays at her house in Surrey, where she was to entertain a large party.

"Oh, I should like it so much, if my husband thinks best," Fanny said, her eyes dancing with delight as she anticipated the pleasures of a visit in an English country house where she knew she would be the queen.

Yes, it was good to be rich and somebody, and as the Colonel, although non-committal on the subject, seemed to favor the plan, she felt sure that she should go, and began to think of other dresses which would be necessary if a week were spent at Grey Gables, Lady Hyer's country seat. She might perhaps have gone there if it had not been for the undue attentions of Tom Hyer, Lord Hyer's younger brother, who made no attempt to conceal his admiration, and who, when the gentlemen were left alone with their cigars, urged the Colonel to accept his sister-in-law's invitation.

"You'll meet no end of swell people there and in the neighborhood," he said. "Cream of society, and madame will be in the swim at once, don't you know: The Prince occasionally visits at some of the houses, and, by Jove, I heard he was coming this winter. If so, Lou, that's Lady Hyer, will nab him if she can; and let him once see madame, her success is sure, don't you know."

"Yes, I know," the Colonel replied, bowing stiffly and longing to thrash the cad who thought that the notice of the Prince could add to his wife's reputation.

On the contrary it would detract from it, and he wanted to tell him so. But the shallow young man would not

have understood him, if he had. He had finished his cigar and joined the ladies, and when the Colonel returned to the drawing room he found him seated by Fanny and filling her ears with the gay times she would have at Grey Gables, where he hoped to meet her again. But the festivities of Grey Gables and its neighborhood, with the Prince of Wales as a possible central figure, were not for Fanny, and when she asked her husband why he declined the invitation, he answered curtly, "Because I choose to do so."

Two days after the dinner party Fanny wrote another letter to her sister very different from the first. There was no regret in it for what she had done,—no mention of homesickness, or Jack; nothing, in short, that the most jealous and exacting husband could not read. She offered it to the Colonel when it was finished, but he declined, saying in much the same tone a father might adopt towards a child who had been punished for some misdemeanor, "I think I can trust you now that you know what my wishes are. I will direct it for you, if you like."

Fanny handed him the envelope, and while he was addressing it added the few words which embodied so much love and longing for news from home and Jack and told Miss Errington that the bending process had begun as she had predicted it would begin. There were one or two more dinners with lunches and calls and drives, and then the Colonel began to talk of the continent and Paris. There he intended finding a maid for Fanny and a valet for himself. Both were necessary adjuncts and would add to his importance, he thought. To Fanny the idea of a maid was very pleasing, but she preferred one who spoke her own language as well as French.

"If I could only find Julina Smith, I should like it,"

she said, " and I think she would be glad to see me. I suppose, though, she is married by this time, or is too fine a person to be a maid. But she might know of some one who would be trusty, which is a great thing to be considered. Her aunt, whose name was Du Bois, kept a French pension, and Julina lived with her. Perhaps Madame Felix might know the place, as she lives in Paris. I wish I dared ask her. I know she is here yet, but she avoids me as if I were the plague."

For answer to this the Colonel laughed derisively at the idea of consulting Madame Felix with regard to a *pension.* There were ways of finding Du Bois and Julina, too, if necessary, he said, without interviewing Madame, who never heard of either. He, too, knew that she was still in the hotel, although he seldom saw her. The little old man was ill and she took her meals in her room with him. Occasionally, however, the Colonel came upon her walking up and down the hall as if for exercise. At such times she always gave him a nod of recognition, with a lighting up of her eyes which interested him more than he cared to confess. She was very aristocratic in her feelings and very exclusive he was sure, and this did not at all detract from his desire to know her. Meeting her in the hall the day after his conversation with Fanny he lifted his hat a little more deferentially than usual, and, begging her pardon for the liberty, ventured to inquire for her husband who he had heard was ill.

Instantly Madame's fine eyes became humid, and her voice full of pathos, as she replied that Monsieur, although better, was still too ill to continue their journey to Paris where she so desired to be, or rather to Passy, where they had a chateau full of servants waiting impatiently for them.

The Colonel was naturally very much concerned about Monsieur and very sorry for Madame, who was most artistically dressed and looked very handsome as she stood in the shadow with her back to the light. The Colonel knew that she was artificial and Frenchy through and through, but she attracted him as she did every man, and he went on to speak of the weather and Paris, where he was soon going, and then he rather awkwardly dragged in Julina Smith and the Du Bois Pension, which his wife was anxious to find. It was hardly probable, but just possible that Madame, who knew Paris so well, might have heard of the Du Bois Pension and could direct him to it. Not that he expected to stop there, or at any other pension. He was going to the Grand, he hastened to say, as even in the shadow he saw the light kindling in Madame's eyes and mistook its meaning. His wife was very anxious to get on the track of Julina Smith, who had once lived in her family, and might be of some service to her in selecting a maid.

For an instant Madame Felix was silent; then, with an outward gesture of her hand, as if thrusting from her something obnoxious, she said in a hard, sarcastic tone, "Monsieur the Colonel does me great honor to enquire of me for the Du Bois Pension and Julina Smith, but I know neither one nor the other, I never kept an intelligence office. Good morning, Monsieur."

With a haughty shrug of her shoulders she swept down the hall, leaving the Colonel discomfitted and abashed, and a good deal ashamed of himself. What should a superb creature like Madame Felix know of Du Bois and Julina Smith, and what a fool he had been to speak of them to her and incur her contempt. He did not tell Fanny of his adventure, which he knew was prompted not so much

by a desire to learn of Julina Smith's whereabouts as to talk with Madame, who had rebuffed him as he deserved. The little old man, as Fanny always called Monsieur, must have recovered strength rapidly, for the next morning, when the Colonel went to the office he found him sitting there wrapped in furs and shawls, waiting for the carriage which was to take him to the Victoria Station. Putting out his wrinkled, withered hand, he bade him good morning cheerily. He was feeling better, he said, and as Madame had suddenly taken it into her head to go home, they were going, as far as Paris at least. He had an incurable and painful disease, and should probably never see England or Monsieur again, he said; but he spoke very cheerfully, as if the next world would be quite as pleasant as he had found this. Then he inquired for Fanny and sent his best compliments to her.

"She has a bonny face, which interests me," he said. "She has smiled pleasantly upon me. I like her. I thank her. Tell her so. If I live, and you stay long in Paris, come to the Hotel Felix in Passy. *Au revoir*, Monsieur. Here is Madame."

She came bustling in, muffled to her chin in her wraps and followed by her maid and her husband's valet, who took possession of his master and almost carried him to the carriage outside. Madame's adieus were politely made, but she did not second her husband's invitation to Passy, or inquire for Fanny. She had not forgiven him for Du Bois and Julina Smith, but her hauteur relaxed a little when he conducted her to the carriage and stood with uncovered head as it drove away. Three days later he followed in the same direction, and for a time fades from our canvas and is lost sight of in the mazes of Continental travel.

Chapter VIII.—Author's Story Continued.

CHANGES IN LOVERING.

Two years had passed since Annie sat with Jack in "our room" at The Plateau and read the letter which came so near wrecking his life, and now it was the day before Thanksgiving and she was alone in the great silent house. Katy, Paul and Jack were all gone, and only the memory of what had been was left to keep her company. It was nearly six months since Katy left for Europe with Miss Errington, who had had the young girl with her much of the time since Fanny's marriage and had given her the best musical instruction in Washington. Miss Errington, who had no particular prejudice against the stage, and who believed that a pure good woman could be as good and pure there as elsewhere, had not at first discouraged Katy's leaning towards it. This was before she knew her well and understood how simple-hearted and innocent and trustful she was; believing everyone to be what he seemed, and how she recoiled from every thing like deception or sham or unpleasant familiarity. Such a girl was not fitted for the stage, where she must at times come in contact with much that would shock her refined and sensitive nature. And when Miss Errington came to understand this she changed her tactics and very quietly threw her influence the other way. But the seed had been sown and Katy never listened to a prima donna that she did not feel a desire to stand in her place and see what she could do towards moving the crowd as Nilsson and others moved it. For the theatre and its plays she did not care. The opera was her ambition, and she believed she could

fill the largest house in the world and scarcely feel the effort. Several times she had sung at receptions, and once in public with other amateurs for some charitable object, and as she heard the bursts of applause which greeted her, and received the quantities of flowers thrown at her feet, she thought, "If this is what it is to be a public singer it must be delightful." Then she remembered Carl's words, "I would rather see you dead than on the stage."

Fan had said the same, but her saying was not quite like Carl's. "And yet he is nothing to me that I should care for his opinion," she thought, knowing the while that she did care, and that the most thunderous applause that ever shook the Grand Opera House in Paris, or Berlin, or Naples, would be nothing to her if Carl's approval were withheld. She had met him once or twice during her winter in Washington, and his attentions had been so lover-like that Miss Errington had said to her, "Carl Haverleigh will propose to you if he has a chance."

"I shall not give it to him; for if I did and accepted him he would forget me in a month," was Katy's answer.

She still remembered the rambles in the woods and the talks beneath the pines in the hillside cemetery, at home, when he had looked and acted love, if he had not spoken it, and she remembered, too, his words to Annie, accidentally overheard, "If any girl thinks my attentions to her more than those of a friend it is because she does not understand me."

She did understand him, she thought, and as she had treated him on Thanksgiving day at the Elms, when he had proposed sending for the clergyman and having a wedding after all, so she treated him now,—pleasantly, familiarly, but never giving him an opportunity of being alone with her. He came to New York to see her off, when

with Miss Errington and Norah, who accompanied them as maid, she started for Europe. Owing to some misapprehension with regard to the sailing of the steamer he only reached it in time to see her for a few moments, and that with a crowd of people surging around them. Just at the last, when the command for "all ashore who are going ashore" was given, he said, "I hear you are to study music in Berlin, and with Marchesi in Paris. Is that so?"

"Possibly," she replied, and he continued: "Have you still career on the brain?"

Something in his tone irritated her, and she answered promptly, "Yes."

"Then, good bye," he said, and taking her hand he wrung it hard and left her.

There were hundreds of people upon the wharf and hundreds upon the ship as it moved away, but Carl saw only one,—a tall, slender girl, in a sailor hat with a blue veil twisted around it, who waved to him until the boat swung out into the river and she was lost to view. Annie's good-bye had been said at home, where she was left alone with Paul and Jack.

Over the latter a change was gradually coming. It is often the case that when God takes one blessing from us he gives us another in its place, and this was verified with Jack. He had lost Fanny, and the loss for a time crushed him bodily and mentally, blotting all the sunshine of his life and leaving him without hope or courage or faith in anything. Then reaction came with renewed health and vigor, and he woke to the fact that God was not the cruel master he had thought him when his hour was at its worst. There was still something left to live for. Old interests began to come back—in the people around him and in

his business. The latter was prospering greatly. Stocks in which he had invested were rising in value. Lands which he had thrown upon the market with little hope of sale were in demand, as were also his services as agent for a large commercial house which paid him double the salary he had before received. This necessarily took him a great deal from Lovering, which he still called his home, although he had rooms in Richmond and St. Louis, where a part of his time was spent. The house on The Plateau remained unsold and closed,—not for lack of purchasers, as several offers had been made him for it, but he declined them all. "Some time, perhaps, I shall sell it, but not now. I am not ready to part with it yet," he would say, and clung to it with a persistency which surprised his friends, and none more so than Annie. To her it seemed like a tomb, with its barred doors and closed shutters and air of loneliness around it. She still kept the keys, and every week or two went up and opened it to let in the air and see that all was safe. Everything was there as it had been two years ago, except the piano, which Miss Errington had insisted upon having returned. The chair in which Fanny was to sit and watch for Jack stood in the bay window with the table and the work-box upon it. The medallion, so like Fanny as a child, still smiled on Annie whenever she entered the room. Every time Jack came to town, whether for a longer or shorter stay, he went to The Plateau, sometimes staying hours and sometimes only minutes, as the fancy took him. What he thought or felt as he sat or walked through the rooms, where so many hopes had been born and died, no one ever knew, for he gave no sign except that his face, when he left the place, was sad, as our faces are when we come from the graves of our dead. But this was wearing away.

His step was growing more elastic, his voice more cheery, and his whole manner more like himself. "He is getting over it," people said, and were glad and rejoiced with him in his recovered spirits and increasing prosperity. His home proper in Lovering was now at the hotel, where his room was fitted up with some of his mother's furniture, but he spent most of his time at The Elms with Annie. He did not call her Annie-mother now, or often call her anything, or talk as much to her as he used to do. And she was content to sit with him in silence, satisfied to have him with her and glad that he was in a more healthful state o mind. Fanny's name was never mentioned by him, or to him by any one, and, for all he knew, she might have been dead and buried.

The last Annie heard from her she was in Paris with her husband, who was suffering from rheumatism and malaria, contracted either in Rome or on the Riviera, and which was so severe as to confine him to his room and chair. In her last letter, written in October, Fanny had said, "We are coming home as soon as George can make up his mind to bear the journey from Paris to Havre." After this Annie knew nothing more of her except the little she heard from Paul, who had been in Paris with Carl three months or more. The physician in Richmond, to whom he had been taken by Annie, had made light of his lameness, saying it would wear off in time. But it did not wear off, and after Katy's departure it increased so rapidly that Annie felt constrained to write the truth to Carl and ask what she was to do. As if anxious to make amends for any former neglect or forgetfulness, Carl had written very often to Paul since his last visit to The Elms, and had sent him many packages, containing sometimes money, sometimes books and toys, or whatever else he thought

would please him. And now, on the receipt of Annie's letter, he came at once full of concern, which deepened when he saw the child's worn face and the slight limp he could not conceal. There was a rapid journey to Philadelphia, another to New York, and a third to Boston, with consultations in each city with the best surgeons and with the same verdict,—hip disease in its incipient stage. Each one consulted was sure he could effect a cure, and each also admitted that probably better medical aid could be had in Paris than elsewhere.

"Then to Paris we will go," Carl said to Annie on his return to The Elms; "and you will go with us."

But Annie shook her head. She had a mortal terror of the sea which she could not overcome. To save Paul's life she would cross it, but hardly otherwise. Fanny was in Paris; Katy was somewhere in Europe with Miss Errington and Norah, and would undoubtedly go to Paris if necessary. "With Fanny and Katy both there you will not need me, and somebody must stay and keep the home fire burning for the rest to come back to when they are tired of wandering," she said, conscious as she said it of another reason of which she could not speak.

Aside from her dread of the long journey and her terror of the sea was a growing feeling that she could not leave Jack. No word of love for her had ever passed his lips, but something told her that over the grave in his heart new hopes were springing, the tendrils of which were reaching towards herself. When he last started on his journey west, which was to last for a longer time than usual, he had thrown his arm across her shoulders as he stood talking to her in the hall before bidding her goodbye. Looking up in his face she had seen something in it she never saw before and which made her drop her eyes and hang her head.

"God bless you, Annie," he said, putting his hand under her chin and turning her face up to his again, "God bless you for all you were to me in the dark days which are brightening now so fast that I see the past only through a mist, and that is rapidly lifting. Good-bye."

He stooped and kissed her on her forehead and was gone, but his kiss still burned where he had imprinted it, and she saw the look in his eyes and heard his voice speaking to her as he had never spoken before. So when Carl came and asked her to go to Europe, she shrank from it with a feeling that she could not.

"I know I am selfish," she said, "and it breaks my heart to have Paul go without me, but indeed I cannot go."

After this Carl did not urge her, but began to look around for some reliable man with whom he could trust Paul at all times and in all places. This point Paul settled himself. At the time when Sam Slayton had been caring for Jack at The Elms a great friendship had sprung up between the little boy and the man, and this had increased as time wore on. Almost every day found Paul at the corner grocery, where he sometimes waited upon customers, but oftener sat upon the counter talking to Sam, who said of him to his friends that he was "the cutest little cuss he ever saw;" while Paul in turn worshiped him as the best man in the world, excepting Carl and Jack. When Miranda came, as she did in due time, the intimacy was not interrupted, but rather increased; for in her loneliness and longing for the five brothers she had left in Vermont, Miranda took at once to the little boy, whose prattle amused her so much. For a year the visits to Miranda continued, and then one morning there were streamers of crape on the doors of the house and grocery, and Miranda

and her own little boy were coffined and ready for the journey back to her grave among her native hills. This happened while Paul was in New York with Carl, and on his return he found his friend alone, and crying like a child as he talked of his dead wife and baby.

"I'm broken all to smash," he said, "and have got to go away from here, where every pound of sugar and every quart of vinegar reminds me of Miranda and the little shaver I was goin' to call for you, if Miss Annie was willin'."

This made Paul feel at once related to the baby which had looked only a few minutes upon the world before it died, and altogether akin to the bereaved man whose rough hand he held between his small white ones, patting and rubbing it in token of sympathy. When told that Paul was going to Europe Sam began to cry again.

"I wish to lan' I could go, too, and look after you and the Square," he said. "I'd be as faithful as a dog, an' I can't stay here with these things hauntin' me and makin' me think of her."

As a result of this, Sam Slayton was hired by Carl to go with him to Europe and care for Paul.

"Not a high-toned valet," Carl said to Annie; "but I like the fellow, and can trust him, and he has promised to be a little more choice in his language, and the slang phrases which Paul is apt to adopt."

Sam rented his corner grocery, bought a new suit of clothes, went to the hills of Vermont and said good-bye to Miranda; and then he joined Carl and Paul in New York, and with them sailed away to Europe, shocking Carl sometimes with his broad Yankee dialect, but proving the most faithful and loyal servant a man ever had, and, when it was necessary, the most efficient of nurses.

With Paul gone and Jack still away, Annie was very lonely. Carl had, in a delicate way, made everything as easy for her as possible, depositing to her account what seemed to her a large sum in a Richmond bank where she kept her small funds. He had also insisted that a young girl should be hired, and as Phyllis approved the plan, a bright mulatto named Rachel was installed in the house as maid, though really she waited upon Phyllis more than upon Annie. But she was young and full of life, and sang as she worked, and often brought Annie bits of gossip from the outside world, which kept her from stagnating. Paul's letters were a great comfort to her. He had early learned to write a childish irregular hand, and every week there came a letter from him, sometimes longer, sometimes shorter, but very dear to the Annie-mother, who he wished could be with him and see all he was seeing. He was under treatment, with the prospect that he would be cured in a little while, and this was comforting. He was at the Grand Hotel in Paris, where they talked the queerest talk he ever heard. Even the children spoke French, and he was going to learn it, too,—and Sam, at whom everybody looked so funny, especially the English, who sometimes laughed at him. But Sam didn't care a *su-mar-kee* for one of them, and Paul didn't care a *su-mar-kee* either. Sam was just as nice as he could be, and had learned every 'bus line in Paris, and knew that *complet* did not mean a place, as he had first thought it did, trying in vain to go there, and hunting all over the map of the city to find it. He hadn't seen Katy, and didn't know when he should. She had been to the *North Pole* to see the sun rise,—then to Stockholm and Russia, and was now in Berlin and was going to Egypt in the winter. *Fan-er-nan* was in Switzerland, but was coming to Paris by-and-by. All this was in his first letter.

Later on he wrote: "They've put me in a plaster jacket and it hurts me some; but I try not to cry, and Sam takes me in a chair along the boulevards and down to the Palais Royal, and everywhere, and yells like a panther at the cabmen when he wants to cross the street and they are aiming at us. 'Git back, you scallywags, don't you see the little boy is lame?' he says, and they *git* every time. You ought to hear him try to talk French. He can say '*Ong-tray*' and *Com-bee-ang*, and *Petty garsong*,' and some more words, and screams when he talks to the people, and they scream at him. I am learning French and teaching English to a nice lady, and this is how it happened. I was sitting in my chair in the court with Sam and my French primer, when there came up to me a very handsome lady with great black eyes and yellow hair and rosy cheeks, which Sam said were painted, but I don't believe it. She put her hand on my head and said something I couldn't understand. I knew it was French and answered, '*I nee parl paw French*'—I had learned so much from my primer—and was very proud when the lady laughed and said, '*Tray be-ang;*' she meant very good, or very well. Then she tried Sam, but he shook his head and said, '*Nix cum arouse,*' at which she stared awfully. She staid until Carl came up. He didn't know her and she didn't know him, but she bowed and he bowed, and they talked some, and Carl made her understand what ailed me. She looked real sorry, and put her hand on my head again and kissed me and went away. I saw her at dinner, where she sat near us, dressed oh! so beautiful, and everybody looked at her, and she didn't care.

"Carl said she was Madame Felix, and the little fussy-looking old gentleman with her was her husband, and was ill; that's why he looked so yellow and shut his lips so

hard as if he didn't feel well. I like him, and so does Sam. He came to me after dinner and talked English very bad, but I understood him. Madame *Julee* he calls her, wants me to teach her English words and she will teach me French. Carl is willing, and every morning now she comes to me and tells me French and I tell her English, which she pronounces sometimes real good, as if she knew it before,—then awfully, and I laugh, and she laughs, and Carl laughs. He is always with us, learning French with me and teaching her English, too. Sam sits and listens and catches on, he says. I've thought sometimes Carl wanted him to go away, but he won't. He don't like Madame. He says she makes eyes at Carl, and once, when he saw her talking and laughing with him, he said, 'What tarnal fools.' I told Carl, and he was mad.

"Sam is going to learn French as fast as he can so as to know what Carl and Madame Julee say to each other, but I am not to tell. I said I wouldn't, though I don't see why Carl shouldn't know that Sam can understand. Do you?"

In Paul's last letter he wrote: "The little old man, Monsieur Felix, has gone to his chateau in Passy. Madame asked Carl and me to go, too, and we wanted to, but Sam looked like a thunder-cloud, and had some high words with Carl, and said how was I to be treated in Passy. So we didn't go, nor Madame either. The little man told her to stay if she wanted to, and she staid. She told Carl it was so lonesome in Passy,—*treest*, I think she said, and the housekeeper and servants would take good care of Monsieur, and she could not bear to be shut up in a sick room with camphire and odor-cologne and nerves; it made her head ache. And Carl said he didn't much blame her and should miss her awful. I am getting to under-

stand pretty well and faster than Sam, and made this out, but didn't tell him, he hates Madame so.

" My plaster jacket hurts me sometimes and I cry, but Sam is so good, and says if I bear it like a man I will one day be tall and straight like Carl. He is splendid, and I'd bear anything to be like him. We get on beautiful in French, and Madame beautiful in English. Queer, how well she pronounces at times. I told her so, and she said I was not to tell Carl, because he'd think if she pronounced well once she might always, and she is pretty bad when he is with us. Two secrets I have now,—her's and Sam's,—and they make my head ache. Madame has taken me to drive two or three times, and once she had a box at the Opera and took Carl and me. Oh, it was beautiful,—the house and everything, except the ballet. I didn't like that,—the girls' dresses were so short and thin, and they whirled so fast and threw their feet so high that I didn't dare look at them much till I heard everybody cheer, Carl and Madame with the rest. Carl looked at them through an opera glass, although he was pretty near the stage. I had heard Fan-er-nan say something about Katy going on the stage, and I whispered to Carl, "Would Katy do like that? "

" ' God forbid!' he said, and turned white, and I said I'd get right down on the floor and hide if she did.

" Madame laughed,—seems as if she understands all I say. She was splendid that night,—nothing on her neck but diamonds, which glittered so in the light. Ever so many glasses were aimed at her, and she liked it. After the opera we went for supper to *Bean-yon's*, an awful dear place. But Carl didn't mind. He ordered everything Madame wanted and a bottle of wine. But he didn't drink. He'd promised his sisters not to, he said. Madame

shrugged her shoulders and drank to the health of his sisters. I was so tired I fell asleep in my chair, and when they tried to wake me up they couldn't. So they sent for Sam, who carried me home in his arms. It isn't far from *Bean-yon's* to the hotel. I slept late next morning, and when I woke Sam was cross as a bear,—not to me, but at Carl, who had gone to Passy with Madame to call on Monsieur. Sam slatted things round and said he wished to Cain that Katy or Fan-er-nan would come and stop it. I asked him 'Stop what?' and he said, 'Stop your asking questions.'

"Sam is funny. Carl has come back and Madame hasn't. I guess the little old man is pretty sick. I miss Madame and so does Carl, but Fan-er-Nan will be here soon."

In his next letter Paul wrote: "Fan-er-Nan is here, and such a great lady. Not like Madame,—stiller, prouder, whiter,—I can't tell you what. 'Big swell, but cold as a snowball. I knew it would be so,' Sam said; but she isn't cold to me. She took me in her arms and hugged and kissed me and sobbed like, but didn't shed any tears. I told her not to feel so bad,—my back was getting well. She hugged me harder, and said, 'There are worse things than backs.'

"What did she mean? Sam heard her, and after she went out he said, 'The cuss!'

"He didn't mean Fan-er-Nan, for I asked him; and he didn't mean Madame, for she isn't here. She was away. I tried my hand at a letter, half French, half English, and told her to hurry up and see Fan-er-Nan, and she wrote to Carl she couldn't come, Monsieur was so ill. Fan-er-Nan has a maid and talks French as well as Madame, but she is so ——I don't know what,—like something bottled up.

Sam says she dresses lovely,—not like Madame exactly, plainer, but in a way you know is first class.

"I have seen the Colonel, and oh my, I don't wonder Fan-er-Nan seems so still. Why, he's *old*, and his foot is all swelled up, and lies out on a cushion, and he has a crutch, and scowls when he talks. He was nice to me, but I didn't stay long and was glad to get out of the room. They are going home before long. I suppose I shall want to go with them. But I must get straight first, and I like Paris and Carl, he is so kind to me, and when I tell him I am a bother, he says, 'Oh, Paul, you don't know all you are to me, you and Sam both.' He calls me his good angel, and Sam his watch-dog. Queer, isn't it?"

Paul's letters troubled Annie. Who was this French woman, and why was Carl so interested in her? At last she decided to ask him about her. She was owing him a letter and would write that night, she thought, as she sat waiting for her supper to be served. Since she had been alone she had abandoned the massive mahogany table which Mrs. Hathern had brought from Boston, and taken her meals upon the little round table which had been her mother's. This now stood by her near the fire, for the day had been cold, and as it drew to a close the wind began to rise, making it colder still. Dark clouds were scudding across the sky, and as the sun went down the rain began to fall, reminding Annie of that day two years ago when she had brought Jack from The Plateau more dead than alive, and Fanny had been on the sea. Where was Jack now, and where was Fanny? and would she come to Lovering after her return? Paul had said she was coming home soon. Perhaps she was there now and had not written.

The train which used to pass through Lovering at four

o'clock now came at quarter past five, and Annie heard the whistle and wondered if there would be a letter for her. She would send Rachel after supper to inquire, she thought, just as a rapid step came on to the piazza and some one entered the side hall. The dining-room door was thrown open, and starting to her feet Annie stood face to face with Fanny.

Chapter IX.—Author's Story Continued.

FANNY.

She had been driven from the station to the head of the avenue where she alighted, telling the driver she would walk to the house. Seeing no light except the one in the dining-room she had entered that way, and in a moment had Annie in her arms crying like a child for joy. Fanny didn't cry. It was a long time since any tears had come to soften the hardness of her eyes. But there was a choking in her throat as she felt Annie's arms around her neck and took in all the old familiar objects,—the carpet she remembered so well,—the clock on the mantel,—the wood fire on the hearth,—the tall andirons,—the fender,—the round table with the simple meal upon it,—and Annie herself, grown younger instead of older, and so plump and round and fair that people called her handsome, with her sweet face, her soft brown eyes and hair and the bright color on her cheeks.

"Why, Annie," Fan said at last, turning her round so that the fire-light fell fully upon her. "How lovely you are, and how young. I might almost pass for your mother,

I am so old and have lived so many years since I saw you. I believe that we are both twenty-eight, and that is not so very ancient, but I feel a hundred."

She was taking off her hat and sealskin sack and gloves, and stood at last revealed to Annie an elegant woman in every respect, with fashion and style and travel and wealth written all over her from the way she spoke and wore her hair to the tip of her French boot which she held up to the fire. Paul had said of her that she was still and white. She was more than that, and seemed to Annie for a time like a marble statue, talking and moving by machinery, with no will of her own. But she began at last to thaw, shaken into something like the Fan of old by Phyllis, who, hearing she was there, came rushing in and taking her in her arms nearly squeezed the life out of her.

"Honey, honey," she said, while the tears ran down her cheeks, "I thanks my Heavenly Father dat dese ole eyes has lived to see de comin' of de glory of de Lord. Dat's de song we sing in meetin', and you's de glory, shoo', so gran' and fine. Oh, glory, glory, glory, hallelujah, hallelujah, Amen!"

Then Fan's old laugh rang through the room, as she said, "Don't have the power, Phyllis, for pity's sake. It will take more than Annie and me to drag you out. Better bring me some hot coffee and a plate, so I can have my supper with Annie."

This brought Phyllis from the skies down to the commonplace, and lamenting that she hadn't known her chile was comin' so as to have had something fit for her, she bustled in and out, bringing everything eatable there was in the house, and then waiting upon the young ladies. Rachel, she said, was well 'nuff for common, but she reckoned nobody was gwine to wait on Miss Errin'ton but herself.

At the mention of that name Fanny shivered and put down the cup of coffee she was drinking.

"Call me Miss Fanny while I am here as you used to do," she said, and laying her head back in her chair she closed her eyes, while there passed before her in rapid review all that had happened since she was Miss Fanny and sat with Annie as she was sitting now with Phyllis attending her.

She had neither been beaten nor sworn at, nor had things thrown at her, as she knew some wives had; the Colonel was too much of a gentleman to do that, but she had been moulded and disciplined and thwarted until it seemed to her she had but little will power left. Just how her husband had subjugated her so completely she could not tell, but subjugated she was, doing as a rule only what he bade her do, and going only where he bade her go. For a time after leaving Paris he had been very proud to see her admired and sought after and had taken her everywhere. Thoughts of Jack ceased to trouble him. He supposed Fanny still thought of him, but she was perfectly exemplary as his wife, and seemed to care little for the attention she received, and he was quite content. Then, for no fault of hers, he suddenly conceived a most violent jealousy of every man who looked at her, or rather at whom she looked, and began to curtail her liberty, telling her where she could go and where she couldn't. At Monte Carlo, where they spent several weeks, he took her with him once into the roulette rooms, which interested her greatly. She had no thought of playing, but she liked to watch the others. As there were some friends with her she did not always keep by her husband, but went from room to room, animated and excited and wholly oblivious to the many who

looked admiringly after her, commenting on her beauty and graceful carriage and wondering who she was. But the Colonel saw it all, and for a short time enjoyed it. Then, as he mixed with the crowd, he overheard some one say, "Is it possible that stern, oldish-looking man, with the bald head and scowl between his eyes, is that lovely girl's husband? I pity her, and him too. She's a high-stepper."

"That's so," was the reply of a second man, who seemed loaded with information. "They say she had another lover whom she jilted for money and who died. Quite a little romance, which will undoubtedly end in another. Those eyes of hers don't look at a fellow for nothing. They actually talk. See, they are resting pityingly on that poor devil who is losing his money so fast, and now they are laughing up into the face of that Russian who has spoken to her. Her old cove of a husband needs to watch her."

The Colonel heard no more. He was boiling with rage, and would have liked to knock down the man who called his wife a high-stepper, and the other one who called him an old cove and predicted a second romance. Evidently he had allowed his high-stepper too much latitude when men commented on her like this, but he'd stop it now. Ten minutes later Fanny was told it was time to leave.

"Oh please, George, not yet," she said. "I like it here so much, and it is not late."

For answer he drew her arm in his and walked away, telling her it was no place for her, with her propensity to attract attention. She was too gushing, he said,—too demonstrative, pitying one man and smiling on another and getting herself talked about. Thereafter he wished her to be more quiet and reserved and keep her gush and

smiles for him. She did not know what he meant or to what he referred, but she grew quiet and reserved and cold, and people called her proud and haughty, not knowing that her heart was dead within her, and that every natural emotion was kept down, with every semblance of affection for or interest in anything. But if her fetters were strong they were golden. She had all the money she wanted until it palled upon her, and sometimes when driving in her luxurious carriage she envied the peasant woman whom she saw in the street, knowing that she could do as she liked, with no one to question her. After the Colonel's lameness came on it was better. She had more liberty, because she took it, and went where she pleased. She never tried to deceive him, but told him where she had been, what she had done, and whom she had seen. He knew he could trust her and always believed her. Once she told him of a young Englishman who had only seen him in his chair with her walking beside him, and who asked her when she met him again how her father was. With a savage imprecation against the young man, whom he called a fool, the Colonel cursed the fate which deprived him of the use of his feet and was fast changing his once erect and military figure into that of a bent old man. He would go back to America and hide himself in his own house, he said, and Fanny did not object. Two years of travel and seeing the world had satisfied her, and she was glad when the day of sailing came, although she dreaded the voyage. Fortunately, she was not sick, but the Colonel was and kept his berth most of the time.

Since his marriage nothing had been said of the cottage at Newport, or of Palmetto Villa in Florida, and the grand house which had been planned before they went abroad

still remained on paper only. With his jealousy and morbid state of mind the Colonel's enthusiasm had cooled. It was better to have his Washington house built when he could see to it, he said, and Fanny acquiesced, as she did in everything. So they went back to the old house on Lafayette Square, and as the Colonel took possession again of his rooms, with every comfort and convenience at his command, he seemed happier than he had been since he left them two years before. Fanny was very kind to him, and had been so ever since his first attack of rheumatism which disabled him from walking, and here, in Washington, she was especially attentive, for her heart was expanding with joy as she thought how near she was to the dear old home which she meant to visit, whether he were willing or not.

Much of all this she told to Annie when, after the table was cleared and the lamp put upon it, she sat on a stool with her head lying in her sister's lap like a tired child which has come to its mother to rest. And Annie listened with the tears sometimes running down her cheeks as she caressed the beautiful head and smoothed the glossy coils of hair, her heart aching as she detected in them more than one thread of silver which was there before its time.

"I believe I told you in my letter that if I were unhappy no one should ever know it," Fanny said, in conclusion, "but here, alone with you, it came out before I thought. Don't suppose, though, it has been all bad, for it has not. I have enjoyed the foreign travel, of course, and I have been nice to George and he has been nice to me a good deal of the time. We have had our spats as, I dare say, all married people do. I have always felt like a slave, though, with an exacting master over me, and only

liberty to think what I pleased. He couldn't help that, and I told him so in the hottest battle we ever had. My thoughts are my own, and that is about all of myself I can call mine. The rest of me belongs to him. When I remember how high-tempered and self-willed I used to be, I can't see how he has done it. But he has. I am like a spirited horse broken to the harness, stopping when its driver says 'whoa,' and starting when he says 'get up.' It is better now,—a good deal better,—and if I could forget I should really be quite contented. But oh, the forgetting! I didn't ask him if I could come. I told him I was coming to spend Thanksgiving with you, and when he said 'Going to see your old lover, Jack, I suppose,' I answered, 'I do not know that he is there. If he is, I shall see him; yes.' Then I came, but can only stay over to-morrow. I must go back next day. I promised I would."

In all she had told of her married life she had not spoken of Jack until now, and at the mention of his name Annie felt the blood rushing through her veins, and her hands pressed very heavily upon Fanny's head which moved a little as for an easier position, so that a part of the white face was visible in the fire-light playing over it. For a while there was perfect silence in the room, and then Fanny asked very low, "Where is he?"

Annie told her where he was and how long he had been gone, and that she expected him now at any time, as he had written that he might spend Thanksgiving with her.

"That would be jolly," Fanny said, sitting up a moment with her hands clasped around her knees and her eyes looking steadily into the fire. "Annie," she said at last, putting her head again in Annie's lap, "you never told me *how* he took it, or what he said. I only know he

was very ill, and suppose I made him so. Tell me all about it,—where he heard it, and when, and how he looked. I want to know everything."

"Oh, Fan,—no, no!" Annie replied. "You couldn't bear it."

"Yes I can. I have borne worse things than that. Tell me everything. Maybe it will make me cry. I haven't cried in more than a year; not since I was ill in Naples and dreamed I was a child again, and Jack came and put his cool hand on my hot forehead and said 'Poor little Fan, does it hurt very bad?' just as he did twenty years ago when I fell from the swing in the barn and raised a great lump on my head. I was so glad to see him, and when I woke and found *he* wasn't there,—that it was George sitting by the window, and old Marcella trying to coax into a blaze a smoky fire, I cried under the bedclothes till the tear cistern ran dry. There has been nothing in it since, and my eyes feel so hot at times that I'd like a real thunder-storm. Tell me what he said and did."

Annie told her everything, sparing no detail and dwelling at length upon Jack's happiness in showing her all he had done for his promised bride and his eager anticipations of the morrow when he expected her. Then she told of the letter,—its effect upon herself and its worse effect on him,—of his anguish as he read it,—his despairing cry which rang through the room in which so many hopes had been centered,—his distraught manner as they drove home through the rain,—his illness,—his loss of faith in God, and his gradual recovery. Fanny's face was hidden and Annie could not tell whether she cried or not. She only knew that she never stirred, but lay like one asleep or dead, until she repeated Jack's words which had burned themselves into her memory.

"Say it again, Annie. I didn't hear you right. There's a roaring in my ears. Fanny—isn't—married;—my Fanny,—who was to have this room,—and watch for me. No-o, Annie. No-o."

Then Fanny shook like a leaf, and one hand slid down at her side into the light in which the costly jewels,—diamonds and rubies and emeralds,—shone like eyes of fire. Then she was still again,—so still that after the story was ended Annie began to wonder at her silence and tried to lift up the face in her lap. It was ghastly white, and the long heavy lashes which lay upon it brought out more clearly the dark circles under the eyes. Fanny had fainted for the second time in her life. It did not take long to restore her to consciousness. With the first dash of water in her face she opened her eyes and gasped; then, realizing what had happened, she shook the drops from her hair and forehead and said with a laugh, "You needn't drown me. I was a great deal worse than this at the hotel when I thought Jack was going to die." Then her eyes grew so large and black that Annie looked at her in wonder. "It was terrible," she said, "and I am not worth all that pain. I could faint, but I can't cry; I wish I could. Poor Jack. You say he is over it now?"

"I think so," Annie answered, with a thought of the kiss he had left on her forehead at parting.

"Does he seem as he used to?"

"Very much."

"Does he go to church?"

"He didn't for awhile; he does now."

"What does he say of me?"

"Nothing."

"Nothing?"

"No, never."

"Do you mean he never speaks my name?" and there were red spots in Fanny's eyes and redder ones on her cheeks.

"No, he never speaks your name," was Annie's reply; and Fanny continued, "And the house on The Plateau, —built for me. What has he done with that?"

"Kept it," Annie replied, while the red spots left Fanny's eyes and cheeks and there was an exultant ring in her voice as she said, "Then he has not forgotten me. Oh, Annie, it has always been a comfort to believe that, bad as I am, Jack still loved me. It has kept me from many things I might have done. Col. Errington does not know how much of my loyalty to him he owes to my faith in Jack. But for that I might have defied him and been the veriest flirt in Europe. There were chances enough. I had only to look at a man to bring him to me. But I seldom looked,—partly to keep at peace with my husband, but more for Jack. Do you think he will come to-morrow?"

Annie hardly thought he would, or she should have heard from him to that effect.

"I feel that he will," Fanny said with conviction. "I hope he will. To see him again,—to hear his voice, and know he didn't hate me would send me back a better and happier woman to my cage, every bar of which is golden, but they hurt me just the same when I beat my wings against them."

Annie did not reply. She couldn't say that she hoped Jack would come. She had hoped so when the day loomed before her long and lonely, but now it was different, and the sight of Fanny might bring back the olden love and leave her stranded just as the goal she longed for was within her grasp.

It was late that night before the sisters went to their rooms, and later still before Annie could sleep. Fanny slept soundly,—"like a top," she said next morning, when she went down to the tempting breakfast Phyllis had prepared.

"You looks pearter and more like Miss Fanny," the old negress said, as she bustled around the table, while Annie, too, noticed the change.

There was color in Fanny's cheeks and her eyes shone like stars, as she went around the house, changing things a little, and wherever she went leaving a more artistic finish than she found. Annie questioned her with regard to Paul and Carl, and then spoke of the French woman, asking if Fanny saw her.

"I saw her in London two years ago,—not in Paris," Fanny said. "She was in Passy with her husband, but I heard of her from Paul and Sam. By the way, Carl never did a better thing than when he took that Yankee with him. He's a curiosity to the foreigners, but faithful as the sun. He doesn't like Madame Felix. He says she's a sham and neglects her husband shamefully,—that the old man is dying, and that if he does she'll 'set her cap for Carl.' That was the way he put it. But she'll not succeed. She is not a lady, and though Carl may like to talk with her, as he does with every handsome woman, he'll never go further than that."

"Is she so very pretty?" Annie asked, and Fanny replied,

"Pretty is not the term to apply to her, any more than *petite*. She is stout,—weighing at least a hundred and seventy; but her figure and dress are so perfect that you forget her size. She has large black eyes and yellowish hair,—a peculiar combination, but Frenchy,—fine teeth, high color, which she owes as much to powder and paint

as to nature, but it's well put on, and deceives the men. There is something about her which attracts them, too. She even won upon George,—or tried to. Me she ignored and avoided. She reminded me of somebody, I could not tell whom, and Sam said the same. He will keep watch of her, and Katy will be in the field by and by. From her pure lovely face Carl could never look the second time at Madame."

Then they talked of Katy and Miss Errington, neither of whom Fanny saw in Europe,—and of the people in Lovering,—and the morning passed and the two o'clock dinner was served, and Jack did not come, and Fanny's spirits began to fall a little. When dinner was over she said to Annie, "You told me you had the key to the house. Give it to me, please. I am going there."

Annie gave it to her and she was soon on her way to The Plateau, taking a circuitous path through the woods so as to avoid the villagers. It was dark when she came back, and the lamp was lighted in the dining-room, where Annie was sitting with the tea-table beside her. Fanny's eyes were very red as she knelt before the fire and held her cold hands to the blaze.

"I have cried at last," she said, with quivering lips and choking voice, and that was all the reference she made then to that visit to the house where God alone saw the anguish of her soul as she went through the silent rooms, with a feeling that it was her own grave over which she was walking.

It was in the upper room she lingered longest,—"Our Room;"—Annie's description had been concise and she knew the chair where Jack had sat when he read her letter, and she saw him there in fancy and heard his pitiful cry, "Fanny isn't married;—my Fanny! No-o, Annie, no-o."

She went to the bay window and sat down by the table where she was to have waited and watched for Jack as he came up the hill, while from every part of the room came the wailing cry, " No-o, Annie, no-o."

The windows,—the doors,—the ceiling,—the walls,—all caught it up and sent it back to her, until it seemed as if her brain were on fire.

" I must cry or die," she said, stretching out her hands and fanning herself with them for more air.

Then rising up she threw herself upon what was to have been her bridal bed and lay there a crushed, remorseful woman, hiding her face among the pillows whose softness had a kind of healing in their touch, bringing tears at last,—blessed tears,—which fell like rivers and cooled her burning fever. She had wanted a thunder-storm, and she had it. The tear cistern, empty so long, was filled and refilled as often as it overflowed. The dainty pillow-shams with her initial upon them were crumpled and soiled and lay at last in a heap under her head, while the little girl in the medallion looked smilingly down upon her, mocking her misery. When her tears were spent and the choking in her throat was gone she rose up, and laying her hands caressingly upon every article in the room, as if in farewell, went down stairs and out into the darkness, locking the door behind her and saying as she did so, " Good-bye, home which was to have been mine. I was not worthy of you. Good-bye."

Then she went swiftly through the woods, reaching home just as Annie was beginning to feel anxious about her.

" I have been through purgatory and feel all scorched and blackened with its flames, but purified and better somehow," she said, as she rose from her kneeling posture

before the fire and, taking her seat by the tea-table, she began to talk and laugh as merrily as if she had really been through purgatory and was entering Paradise.

Some comment which she made about the knife she held reminded Annie of the wedding present Carl had sent to her two years before. She had written Fanny about it, asking if she should send it to Washington, and Fanny had replied, "Keep it until I come home." Bidding Phyllis bring the boxes Annie opened them, disclosing the contents to her sister, whose surprise and delight were unbounded.

"They are exquisite," she said, "but our house in Washington is full of silver and china. These were meant for Fanny Fullerton, not for Fanny Errington. The silver is marked "H." Keep them for yourself when you marry, if you ever do."

The spot upon her forehead which Jack had kissed burned so at the mention of her marrying that Annie felt as if her sister must see it, and she put up her hand to cover the place. All day she had half expected Jack and hoped he would come. "Better that he should see Fanny and know that he is cured before he commits himself again, she thought, as she watched her sister with a feeling that if she had lost some of her girlish beauty and vivacity, she had gained in grace and an indescribable something which would distinguish her from hundreds of women.

But Jack did not come, and Fanny left the next morning without seeing him. Annie urged her to stay longer, but she replied, "I promised and must keep my word like that old chap Romulus, or Remus or Regulus, which was it, who went back to Carthage and was rolled in a barrel full of spikes. I shan't be rolled in a barrel. On the contrary, George will be glad to see me. I'm nice to him

most of the time. He says I bandage his foot better than Clary,—that's his man,—and I read to him by the hour, and brush his hair, and am really quite a pattern wife. When I can't stand it any longer and he swears awfully,—not at me,—he never does that,—but at Clary and his foot, I go off by myself and say some big words and make faces and look at my diamonds and read some slips cut from papers about the beautiful and accomplished Mrs. Errington, and feel better."

She talked as if she were wholly heartless, but Annie knew her gayety was feigned and pitied her intensely.

"When George is better I mean to have you come to Washington and see how grand I am," Fanny said, when dressing for her journey. "I knew a good many people there as Miss Hathern, and as Mrs. Errington I shall know more, and can introduce you to the best society. So when I send for you, come."

She was very bright and cheerful at breakfast, which was eaten by lamplight, for in order to connect with the Washington train she must leave Lovering at an early hour and then wait in Richmond until nine o'clock or later.

"I don't mind it at all," she said, when Annie expressed her regret at the delay, and as she tied on her bonnet she began to hum a strain of an opera, keeping time to it with her head.

Was she then so glad to go back, Annie wondered. The truth came out at last.

"I have a presentiment that I shall see Jack in Richmond while I am waiting. I am almost sure of it. Oh, Annie, you don't know what it will be to me just to hear his voice once more," she said, and then with a good-bye kiss she was gone and Annie was alone again.

CHAPTER X.—AUTHOR'S STORY CONTINUED.

JACK AND ANNIE.

JACK had hoped to spend Thanksgiving with Annie, but had been detained a day longer than he anticipated, and did not reach Richmond until Thanksgiving night. He had come from the west and stopped in Washington the very day that Fanny left for Lovering. He did not know that she had returned from Europe until he overheard two men in the office of the hotel speaking of the Colonel, who, they said, was in a very critical condition, as there was danger at any moment that his rheumatism might attack his heart.

"He will leave a handsome young widow behind him," one said, while the other nodded and replied, "She'll console herself readily enough with the lover she jilted. You knew about that, didn't you?"

The man questioned didn't know, and his friend began at once to tell the story. But Jack didn't wait to hear it, and leaving the hotel he walked rapidly through street after street, excited and angry that Fanny's name should be thus bandied about in public. His love for her was gone, but he could not forget what she had been to him, and it was dreadful to hear her spoken of in that way. As he walked there came over him a desire to see where she lived. It did not take long to find the place, and standing on the opposite side of the street he looked curiously at the great silent house, in which no light was shining except in the hall and from the upper windows of a corner room where the Colonel sat groaning with pain and cursing himself for an idiot that he had let Fanny go even

for a day. No one cared for him as she did, and he missed her more than he had thought it possible.

"I've been a brute a good many times, but I mean to do better when she comes back. I don't suppose, though, I can ever make her love me. Confound that Fullerton; I wonder where he is," he was thinking, just as the electric bell pealed through the house and kept on ringing, as they sometimes do, until the housemaid, who hurried to the door, stopped it.

"Who the devil is that greenhorn ringing like that?" the Colonel said, as every whiz of the bell rasped his nerves afresh.

It was Jack. From seeing the house there had come to him a desire to see Fanny.

"Nothing can better assure her that I am all over it than calling upon her," he thought, as he crossed the street and touched the electric button.

Mrs. Errington was not at home the maid said, and with a half feeling of relief that she was not, Jack gave the girl his card and left.

"Who was it?" the Colonel asked from the open door of his room.

The maid brought him the card.

"John D. Fullerton, Lovering, Va.," the Colonel read, consigning Jack at once to the lower regions, together with his aching foot which, at the sight of his rival's name, he had lifted high in the air, with the result of a sharper twinge than any he had experienced. "What brought him here, I wonder?" he thought, feeling glad that Fanny was not at home and gladder still that she probably would not see Jack at Lovering.

Meanwhile Jack went to his hotel and the next day started for Richmond, reaching it too late for the train to

Lovering. Once he thought to telegraph Annie; then decided to surprise her on Friday. It was necessary to see his employers, whose office on the third floor commanded a view in the distance of the plain across which, about half-past nine on Friday morning, the Washington train was speeding on its way with Fanny in it. While waiting at the station she had looked into the gentlemen's room and walked through several streets, hoping that chance might throw Jack in her way if he were in the city, and feeling greatly disappointed that she did not find him. Returning to the station she finally took her seat in the car which was to carry her to her husband, a happier woman than when she left him,—happier because she believed, after what Annie had told her, that Jack loved her still, and this lightened every dark spot in her life. She might have changed her mind could she have read his thoughts as he sat awaiting the arrival of one of the firm and watching her train as it disappeared from view. He had no suspicion that she was in it, but he was thinking of her and his call at her house, and was glad that with his thoughts of her now there was neither bitterness nor regret for the past. Once she had filled his heart so completely that he would have given his life for her, but she had gone from it, leaving it empty and ready for another occupant. Just when it came to him that *Annie* was the sweetest and dearest and loveliest little woman in all the world he could not tell. But it had come, and it seemed to him that he had always loved her,—not as he did Fanny, but that she had always been necessary to him,—that when Fanny's beauty and teasing coquetry were stirring him to the very depths, Annie's gentleness had acted as a counter irritant, soothing and quieting him and bringing out the best there was in him. It was weeks

since he had seen her, but he had carried her image with him as she was that night he parted from her and kissed her on the forehead. Something in her eyes had made him think that he was more to her, perhaps, than the brother he had called himself, and all through his travels in Colorado and Utah and Texas he had been revolving in his mind the expediency of asking her to be his wife, and had built many castles for the future which began to look fair and bright to him again, with Annie as his guiding-star.

"I shall see her to-night and settle it," he thought, while he watched Fanny's train until the last wreath of smoke disappeared in the distant woods.

He could better afford to marry now than he could two years ago, when nearly everything he had was expended upon his house, which he had finally decided to sell. His business over he started for Lovering, which he reached at the same hour Fanny had on the day of her arrival. His first thought was to go at once to The Elms. Then he concluded to wait until later when Annie was sure to be alone. Something, he scarcely knew what, prompted him to take The Plateau on his way. Possibly it was to see if there still lingered in his heart any feeling of regret that the hopes which once clustered around the spot had been so cruelly blighted. He reached it about dark and as he walked around it, it seemed to him more than ever like a tomb in which a part of his life was buried. He always kept one key with him, while Annie had the other. Entering the house at last he went through the rooms one after another until he came to the bridal chamber. Even here there was no longing in his heart for the woman who had so cruelly betrayed him. It was there his love for her had received its death blow, and he looked

around him as we look at the grave of a friend years after the friend was buried there. Suddenly he started as his eyes became accustomed to the dim light. The bed was tumbled,—the pillows were displaced,—the shams were crumpled. Somebody had lain there,—not quietly, but restlessly, as if in pain, or great excitement. Who was it, and how did they get in? He examined every door and window below. Everything was secure, and in some perplexity he left the place and walked rapidly to The Elms. Again there was a bright fire on the hearth in the dining-room, with the round tea-table before it, and again Annie was sitting beside it, very pretty in her brown dress, the shade of her eyes and hair. Rachel had brought her a half-opened rose, which had grown on a bush Phyllis had been tending in her kitchen, and Annie had fastened it on her bosom, thereby adding to the brightness of her appearance. She had spent a lonely day with Fanny gone and no message from Jack, who was probably still far away. Rachel had brought in her supper and she had dismissed the girl, preferring to be alone. She was not hungry, and was sitting with her feet on the fender and her hands clasped behind her head and looking into the fire so intent upon her thoughts that she did not hear the opening or closing of the door, nor the step on the floor as Jack crept up very cautiously until he stood looking down upon her partially upturned face as her head rested on the back of her chair. It was a very fair face,—a pure, honest, innocent face, where nothing unwomanly had ever written a line. It was just the face a good man would like to kiss, and Jack did kiss it, not once but many times, as he stooped over her and put his big warm hands under her chin and drew her nearer to him.

With a cry she bounded to her feet and looked at him

with crimson cheeks and a light in her face such as he had never seen in Fanny's face when she was the kindest to him.

"Oh, Jack, how did you get in and I not hear you?" she said, and then her eyes fell under something she saw in his and understood.

He held her hand and had one arm around her when Rachel came in to clear the table. The girl was young and knew the signs, and hurried out with the tea things, telling Phyllis that "Mas'r Jack had done come and was sparkin' Miss Annie, who snugged up to him as if she liked it!"

"In course she likes it, and I thanks de good Lord who has brung it to pass on account of my rasslin' so much in prar that it might come," Phyllis said, never doubting that she had been instrumental in moving the Almighty to bring about what she so much desired. "Don't you go anigh, nor make a speck of noise, for dis is a solemn occasion," she said to Rachel, restraining her in every way and herself walking in her stocking feet lest she should disturb the couple, who would scarcely have heard a cannon had it been fired in the lane.

Leading Annie to the couch where he could hold her in his arms better than if she sat in one chair and he in another, Jack told his love in a straightforward way and asked her to be his wife.

"I cannot offer you the same kind of love I gave to Fanny," he said. "That began in my boyhood and was like the fruit which ripens early, with a blight upon it. You know how it died, but not how dead it is, or how another more healthful love has sprung up for the dear little girl who was always better suited to me than Fanny. Don't speak yet," he continued, as he saw Annie about

to protest. "I have had time to think it over among the Rockies;—on the plains and prairies of the west and under the southern skies. The past has always been with me, and I have never for a moment forgotten what Fanny was to have been to me. If I had not lost my faith in God I should have prayed to die, but I had made myself believe that if there were a God He did not care for me, and I was not willing to go unbidden into His presence. Always in my darkest moments I seemed to see *you*, pitying and comforting me as you did that dreadful night. At first your face was shadowy,—then it began to clear, until now it stands out before me as the dearest, sweetest face in the world. Sweetest because of the truth and goodness showing in every feature, and dearest because it is the face of my wife that is to be."

He was taking things for granted and kissing the face he thought so sweet, until it was as red as the rose which Annie wore and which became fearfully crumpled as the lovemaking went on.

"Oh, Jack," Annie said, when at last she could get a chance, "Oh, Jack, you frighten me so, and Fanny was here yesterday, and left this morning. I don't quite believe she would like to have you say all this to me. She is happier in knowing that you remember her."

"I do remember her," Jack replied. "I think of her every day,—but that has nothing to do with my love for you. She has gone out of my life as completely as if she were dead. Why shouldn't she? What have I to do with a married woman? You say she has been here? Tell me about it."

Very briefly Annie told him of Fanny's visit, saying that she left that morning.

"Then she must have been in the train I watched till it

was out of sight. I should like to have seen her. She is a very grand lady by this time, I suppose," Jack said, and then told of his call at the house in Washington, speaking as indifferently as he would have spoken of an ordinary acquaintance. There could be no more doubt that the old love was dead than that the new was in all its freshness and vigor and would not be denied.

"You have not answered me yet," Jack said at last. "I want to hear you say you love me, and I shall know it is as true as the everlasting hills."

"Oh, Jack," Annie said. "If you are perfectly sure you want me, I will be your wife. I believe I have loved you all my life."

He had his arms around her again and was showering kisses upon her face, when Rachel, curious to know how matters were progressing, peered cautiously in and then tiptoed back to the kitchen, her eyes like saucers as she said, "He's gone done it, sho'; he's squeezin' her,—oh, my. Lem' me show you," and she experimented on Phyllis, who shook her off, saying, "Git 'long wid ye. Dat ar' no way to do it. When I'se young an' Josiah came cross de hemp fields courtin' me, he got on his knees, an' I done sot in his lap, an' oh, my Lor', de good times till he took de cholera an' died an' lef' me a widdy."

"Oh, dat's long 'go. We's more refined sense de wah, and spark different,—more like white uns," Rachel replied, with the air of one who was skilled in love-making as practiced "sense de wah."

It was late that night before Jack left The Elms. He had so much to say, and his love kept growing so fast for the quiet little girl, who was content to sit with her head upon his arm and her hand in his and listen while he told her over and over again how dear she was to him, and

planned their future. Fortune was favoring him in many ways, and although he might never be rich he should be able to surround her with every comfort and relieve her of all care.

"Would you like to live at The Plateau?" he asked, and Annie answered quickly, "No, no; not there. I might get jealous of Fanny. Let us stay here where I was born, and keep the dear old home for them all to come to, Paul and Katy and Carl. I can't help thinking he will yet be one of us,—and Fanny, too. Something tells me she'll come by and by."

Just what Jack thought of Fanny's coming he did not say, but he planned with Annie to sell the house on The Plateau with all its belongings to a gentleman from Richmond who had spoken of buying it. He urged a speedy marriage,—the sooner the better,—although it would be hard to tear himself away for the long trips he might have to take at intervals for several months and possibly a year. But Annie said "No; we must wait till you are through traveling. I could not bear to have you leave me alone after I was your wife. And then I want Katy and Paul here when we are married. Let us say next Thanksgiving. I shall not be quite an old maid then. I am only twenty-eight now."

She laughed merrily as she glanced up at him with a look which reminded him of Fanny, it was so bright and coquettish. Was that why he kissed her so passionately? He didn't think so. He believed every spark of his old love dead, or he would not have talked of a new. Annie was not as beautiful as Fanny, but she was very lovely in her mature womanhood, and would never fatigue and worry and bewilder him as Fanny had done in her varying moods. He was supremely happy, and when alone that

night in his room at the hotel he knelt down for the first time since the morning two years before when he had made so many good resolves, and thanked God in so many words for taking Fanny from him and giving him Annie instead.

Chapter XI.—Author's Story Continued.

THE HOUSE OF MOURNING.

"Washington, January 6th, 187—

"To Miss Annie Hathern, Lovering, Va.

"Col. Errington died last night. Come at once.

"Fanny."

This telegram was brought to Annie one morning just after Jack had left her for Richmond. For a moment everything around her was chaos, as she sat with the message in her hands trying to collect her thoughts, which turned into a strange channel. Col. Errington was dead. Fanny was free, and loved Jack as well, or better, than she ever did. And Jack? What of him? Now that the barrier was removed, would his first great love revive, kindled again into flame by his pity for Fanny, and the wiles she would surely practice upon him, given the chance?

"No, oh no!" Annie said at last. "It is unjust to Jack and a wrong to Fanny."

Then as she read again the "Come at once," she began to plan for her journey, the first she had ever taken alone. It was too late to go that day, and she must take the early train the next morning and wait in Richmond as Fanny had done.

"I shall telegraph Jack to meet me there," she thought, wondering how he would look when she told him Col. Errington was dead.

The little jealous stab would intrude in spite of her, and when, the next morning, summoned by the telegram he had received from her the day before, Jack met her at the station, she told him the news in a breath.

"Oh, Jack, Col. Errington is dead. Fanny is a widow and has sent for me," she gasped, and then looked up at him, much as a criminal in the dock looks at the judge when receiving sentence.

But what she feared she might see was not there. Jack was startled, but not greatly surprised, as he recalled what he had heard of the Colonel's condition in Washington. The words "Fanny is a widow" made no other impression than to present her to his mind as sorrowful and alone. He knew nothing of her married life, but supposed she had been comparatively happy, inasmuch as she had her heart's desire,—money. Naturally, she was very desolate now in the first stages of her grief, and in his great kind heart he was sorry for her, but more sorry for the timid girl clinging so closely to him as she asked many questions about her journey,—must she change cars and did he think they would run off the track, and what should she do when she got there if there was no one to meet her. He told her that she did not change cars,—that the train would not run off the track, and there would be some one to meet her if, as she said, she had telegraphed that she was coming. Then he made her sit down while he went for her ticket, and when he came back to her he held up *two*, instead of one.

"Jack," she exclaimed, "*are* you going with me?"

"Yes, little woman. I thought it would please you," he replied, taking her arm to lead her to the train.

She was very glad, and still the little stab would intrude, as she wondered how much he was actuated by a wish to see Fanny again, and how much by a desire to please her. The train was a slow one and this day it was unusually slow, so that it was late when it drew into the station in Washington. Half the way at least Jack had sat with his arm partly around her, and once, overcome with fatigue, she had fallen asleep, and when she awoke had found her head lying on his shoulder.

"Oh-h, excuse me. What must the people think?" she said, blushing crimson, as if guilty of an indiscretion. Jack laughed and answered, "They'll think you are my wife or sweetheart, and who cares if they do? Put your head down again. You look tired."

But Annie sat bolt upright the rest of the way, and as far from Jack as she could get. When they reached Washington he took her to the waiting-room, while he went to look for the Errington carriage, if it were there. With a little inquiry he found it,—a very grand turnout, with its shining black horses and shining harness and shining driver in livery, who said he was sent for Miss Hathern.

"Come on; it's all right," Jack said to Annie, leading her to the carriage and seeing her inside. Then, greatly to her surprise, he put himself half way in and kissed her, saying, "Good-bye, darling. Write me to-morrow, and don't stay longer than you can help."

"But, Jack, arn't you going with me?" Annie cried, and he replied, "Why, no. I only came to see you safely here and shall go back to-night. The train leaves in half an hour. If I could be of any service to Fanny I'd go, of course; but she has plenty to help her. Give her my kind regards, and say I am sorry for her. Good-bye."

He kissed her again, closed the door, and motioned the coachman to drive on.

'Mrs. Errington wishes me to bring you to her directly," the maid said to Annie, who, cold and tired and bewildered by the elegance and grandeur which met her eyes on every side, followed on up the wide stairway to the room where Fanny sat, her face very pale and her eyes very large and bright, but with no particular semblance of grief, except the closed shutters and the deep black border on the handkerchief she held in her hand.

"Annie, I am so glad you have come at last. Adam was gone so long I was afraid there might have been an accident, and you all alone and not accustomed to traveling," she said, holding out her arms and only half rising from her chair.

"The train was late, but I was not alone. Jack came with me," Annie replied, and instantly Fanny's whole demeanor changed.

In her own house, and a widow just bereaved, she had not at first seemed just as she did in Lovering with the old familiar objects around her and her head in Annie's lap. She was a grander, more dignified lady, as befitted her surroundings, and Annie had noticed it and thought it quite appropriate. But at the mention of Jack she was Fanny again, and springing up exclaimed, "Jack came with you! How kind in him. Where is he? Why didn't he come here at once?"

Annie explained that he only came because she was timid and foolish,—that he was going back that night, and had sent his kind regards to Fanny and said he was sorry for her.

"He is *not* going back to-night if there is time to reach

him. I want to see him. It is perfectly proper for him to come here,—the only male friend I have in the world, and just like a brother," Fanny said, her hands shaking with excitement as she touched the bell and summoned her maid, Marie.

Adam was ordered to return to the station as fast as possible,—find the gentleman who came with Miss Hathern and bring him to the house.

Meanwhile, Annie had removed her hat and cloak and drawn up to the fire in the grate.

"You are cold," Fanny said, and "hungry, too. Dinner will be served as soon as Jack gets here, and I shall be so glad to have some one at the table with me. I have scarcely eaten since—George—died." She hesitated a little and then went on steadily, "It was very sudden at the last and I was sorry when I saw him dead and knew how he wanted to live." Annie looked at her quickly, and she continued, "I know you think me hard, but there is no need for me to pretend to be heartbroken with you, who know everything. There was no real affection between George and me, although we were getting on better of late, and since my visit to Lovering we have been very friendly and familiar, kissing each other every morning and every night. He was glad to see me when I came home, and only said one mean thing. Jack called,—perhaps you know,—and left his card. George showed it to me and said, 'I dare say you'd rather have missed your visit home than him.' I replied, 'A great deal rather.' He didn't swear at me, but he did at his foot and went on to say, 'You may have a chance soon to get your old lover back, if the doctor is right in his diagnosis. He says there is danger of this confounded rheumatism attacking my heart if I allow myself to get excited as I do at times. I

was swearing pretty loud at Clary and my face was purple, I suppose. So the easiest way to get rid of me is to worry and annoy me and rouse me up.'

"I was very angry, but did not say a word There was something in his face I had not seen there before A change for the worse and it deepened every day as the disease crept up to the region of his heart. I was as kind to him as I could be, and he wanted me with him all the time. Once after I had read to him an hour and brushed his hair, he put both his poor swollen hands up to my face and said, 'You are very good to me, Fanny, and I have cared more for you than you thought. I have been hard and mean, but when I get well we will begin again.'

"That touched me more than anything he had ever done, and I said I had been mean, too, and kissed him, and I am so glad to remember it now he is dead. It was awfully sudden at the last. He seemed better and wanted to go down to dinner with me, and asked me to put on one of my pretty dresses from Worth's and let him see me in it. I did so and walked back and forth in his room, while he commented and admired. Then I went to dinner and was nearly through when Marie came running in and told me he was dying. I reached him in time for just one look from his eyes, and such a look, as if he wanted to tell me something. Then he was gone. I wish it had been different with us and that I could feel as a widow ought to feel. But I can't. There is a lump in my throat when I think of George, and I have been in and looked at his dead face many times, and staid there once half an hour trying to get up a widow's feeling. I am sorry that I did not make him happier, but I can't cry, and don't want to. I shall enact all the proprieties,—wind myself in crape and wear a widow's cap, which will be horridly unbecoming, and shall

hanker after all my new Paris gowns I was to wear this winter, and which are of no use to me now. Hark! Isn't that the carriage I heard? I wonder if Jack came."

She ran to the window to look out. Jack did not come. Adam had reached the station just as the train for Richmond had gone, and, greatly disappointed, Fanny went with Annie to dinner, which was served as Annie had never seen a dinner served before, for Fanny exacted her pound of flesh and never omitted any ceremony, although she dined alone. She had married for money and position and style, and she made the most of them, finding in them some compensation for the emptiness of her domestic life. For the dead man in his costly casket she had no love. He had thwarted her at every point and kept her down, and now that the iron hand was withdrawn she could not help a feeling of relief, although sorry for all that had been unpleasant between them as man and wife. He had been far more in fault than she, but now that he was gone she could recall many a time when she might have done differently and provoked him less. But he was dead, and she was not going to wear her life out with regrets for what could not be helped, she said to Annie, when, after dinner was served, she sat again in her room and talked first of George and then of Jack, and quite as much of the latter as of the former. Twice Annie opened her lips to tell her of her engagement, but each time something Fanny said checked her. "I'll wait," she thought, with an uneasy feeling that such news might affect Fanny more than the death of her husband.

The funeral was private, and Fanny, wound in crape, as she said she should be, looked the embodiment of grief, and felt a sharp pang of pain and remorse when her husband was carried from the house he would never enter

again. It was hers now with everything pertaining to it, for she was sole heir to all his large fortune. The family lawyer told her this and read her the will when all the paraphernalia of death were removed, the blinds opened, and the wintry sun was shining brightly into the handsome rooms. The will was made while Fanny was in Lovering, and when she heard it and knew that everything was hers unconditionally she covered her face with her hands and cried.

"It was so kind in him," she said to Annie when they were alone. "I didn't expect it, and I don't deserve it." Then she began to plan what she would do with so much money. Annie was to have some, and Katy and Paul, and Jack, if he would take it. Did Annie think he would? "No, never; don't insult him that way," Annie exclaimed so energetically that Fanny looked at her in surprise, but with no suspicion of the truth.

Again and many times thereafter Annie tried to tell her, but as often as she tried something held her back. A little shadow was darkening her horizon, and it increased as the days went on and she gained a clearer insight to Fanny's real feelings. She was a model widow, doing everything she ought to do, secluding herself from the world, seeing very few who called, wearing her weeds with a tolerably good grace, except the cap, and talking a good deal of George, but far more of Jack And Annie, listening to her, felt herself grow sick with a morbid fear as she thought "she loves him, and—perhaps—perhaps—now that she is free, his love for her will come again, and I shall be left desolate."

More than one fierce battle the brave little woman fought with herself when alone in her room. If Jack turned to Fanny could she bear it and make no sign, she asked

herself over and over again, while her heart ached as if the thing she so much dreaded had come to pass. In her calmer moments she could remember how wholly Jack seemed to love her now, and that gave her comfort and hope. "But if he is mistaken,—if as time passes and he meets Fanny, as he must, and falls again under the spell of her beauty, I shall know it and give him up," she thought. "Better so than share a divided heart. That I could not bear. I'll not tell Fanny of our engagement yet. I'll give Jack a chance and trust him until I see some sign."

There was a long letter from Jack the next day, full of love and tenderness, with a kind message for Fanny, who fortunately did not hear the postman and thus knew nothing of the letter which Annie read and hid in her bosom like a guilty thing, blushing when her sister looked at her and turning away as if afraid her treasure might be snatched from her. Fanny had no suspicion. She only thought how pretty Annie was growing in her old age, as she laughingly called their twenty-eight years. Once she led her to the glass and said, "See how much younger you look than I do, especially in this disfiguring cap. I won't wear it," and she tossed the offending head-gear upon the bed. Even without it there seemed a disparity of years between them, for over Annie's face no stormy passions had ever swept like those which had written faint lines about Fanny's eyes and mouth and frosted some threads of her hair just where it showed the most. Annie's was soft and brown and glossy as a child's, and the light in her eyes was steadfast and clear and always the same, except when she thought of losing Jack. Then it grew suddenly misty with the tears she kept forcing back.

Several times as the weeks went by Fanny wondered why Jack didn't write, and once she suggested writing to him and

inviting him to come to Washington and accompany Annie home when she was ready to go. But Annie saw through the ruse and dissuaded her from it, saying she felt quite equal to making the journey alone. She had received several letters from Jack and had always been fortunate enough to take them directly from the postman or Marie, and Fanny, who staid a great deal in her room knew nothing of them. On the whole, Annie's life in Washington was not very hilarious. She took several drives, visited the Capitol, the Treasury, the Patent Office and Smithsonian, and attended a reception at the White House, and received a few calls. But the ladies who came in velvets and furs and carriages were not like the people of Lovering, who ran in informally morning or evening or at any time. She missed the familiarity and friendliness of her home life, and after staying six weeks with her sister she announced her intention of going back to Lovering.

At first Fanny objected, then suddenly changed her mind and seemed rather to accelerate her sister's departure than to retard it. Annie had told her of Jack's intention to sell the house on The Plateau, and that had troubled her.

"Tell him not to do it. Maybe I shall live there yet," she had said more than once, and on the morning when Annie left her she referred to it again, adding, as she kissed Annie good-bye, "If I find this big house too ghostly I shall come home. You may see me at any time. Give my love to all the people, and—yes,—to Jack, too. Why not? Tell him I think him mean never to have sent me any message, except the one you brought me the night you came. He might at least have sent me a card of sympathy for the sake of Auld Lang Syne."

She didn't look as if she needed much sympathy, as she

stood in her black gown, tall and graceful, with a healthful light in her eyes, a smile on her lips, and color in her cheeks to which the roses were coming back; and it was this picture of her which Annie carried in her mind as the train moved out of Washington and on into the rather desolate Virginia country through which the road to Richmond passes.

Chapter XII.—Author's Story Continued.

GOING HOME.

"I don't want to be a great lady in society. I'd rather live all my life in plain Lovering," Annie thought as she reviewed the incidents of her visit, and then her mind turned upon Jack, who was getting impatient for her return. She knew he was in Richmond and was wondering if he would meet her, when the cars suddenly stopped. Something was the matter with the engine which could not be remedied at once. They were near Fredericksburg and a few of the passengers walked to that place, but Annie kept her seat, varying the monotony occasionally by short excursions into the woods. It was three hours before they were ready to start and then they moved but slowly. All hope of connecting with the Lovering train was given up, and Annie was beginning to feel very desolate and to wonder what she should do in a strange city and alone, when they stopped again for water. She was cold and hungry, and there were tears in her eyes as she looked out upon the darkening landscape and thought of Jack and wished he was with her. Leaning her elbow on the window stool she was about to indulge in a good cry when

somebody came up behind her, put both hands on her shoulders, joined them together under her chin, drew her face upwards and backwards and kissed her!

"I knew you by the little red wing on your brown hat," the somebody said, and Jack was sitting beside her.

He had a few hours off, he explained, and had come to meet her, knowing that the train stopped for water at this station, where he had waited during what seemed a little eternity.

"I knew you'd be hungry and I foraged round till I found a sandwich, a fried cake and some apples," he continued, putting a paper parcel in her lap and getting possession of one of her hands.

She was not cold any more, or very hungry either, although she managed to make way with a sandwich and part of a fried cake whose age she could not well guess.

Jack was with her. He had come to meet her. His face was close to hers,—his arm was around her notwithstanding that she told him people were looking on, just as she had told him on their journey up.

"Let them look," he said, glancing around. "There's nobody behind us but an old man, and two old women, and a young one who would like to be in your place."

Then he asked her about her stay in Washington and made some inquiries about Fanny as naturally as if she had been the most ordinary acquaintance. It was eight o'clock when they reached Richmond and Jack took Annie for the night to a friend of his. The next afternoon he accompanied her to Lovering, where Phyllis was ready for her. Jack had telegraphed that Annie was coming, and the old negress stood in the door, a new turban on her head, and her face shining as she welcomed her mistress home.

"Oh, it is so good to be here," Annie said, as she let Phyllis remove her cloak and hat and then sank into the easy-chair before the fire.

The round table was brought out again for supper with the best silver and china, and Phyllis waited and repeated all the gossip of the town, while Annie listened with more interest than she had felt for anything since she left home. Lovering was the place to live in and Fanny was welcome to her grandeur and the society of which she thought so much. By and by Jack came in and then it was heaven with him beside her, talking of their future with almost as much enthusiasm as he had once talked to her of that to-morrow which had never dawned for him. He was going north soon on a tour which might be extended into three or four months. This was to be the last, for when he returned his place was to be filled by another man and he was to become partner in the firm and open a branch of the business in Lovering.

"Then we shall be married. There is no reason why we should wait any longer," he said, kissing the face resting upon his shoulder as he talked. "I thought I was sure to sell the house on The Plateau, but the man has changed his mind. Someone else, however, will want it," he said.

Annie was silent for a moment, and then she said, "Fanny bade me tell you not to sell it."

"Why! What possible interest can she have in it?" Jack asked in some surprise, and Annie replied "She said she might live there yet."

"*Fanny* live at The Plateau! Impossible! What does she mean? Didn't you tell her of our engagement?" Jack said.

"No," Annie answered falteringly.

"Why not?" Jack demanded in surprise.

Hesitating a little Annie replied, "I hardly know. I tried to tell her two or three times, but something always stopped me. Jack," and Annie began to finger the buttons on his coat, counting them to herself as she did so, "I do not believe Fanny ever cared very much for her husband."

"I never supposed she did, but what has that to do with your not telling her?" Jack said, imprisoning the hand fingering his buttons.

Annie had not intended letting him know of the foolish fancy which had possessed her, but she could not very well help it now, and she continued: "She did care for you very much, and you for her, and if you were to see her, now that she is free, you might—perhaps—Oh, Jack,—you might care for her more than for me!"

Annie's voice was not at all steady, and so low that Jack bent down to listen until his face touched hers. He heard her though and understood her perfectly.

"Annie," he said, "Is it possible you do not know how dead is my love for Fanny,—dead and buried, and the ground above its grave stamped down so hard that it can never rise again. Don't let that trouble you. Fanny's freedom is nothing to me. *She* is nothing to me except a memory,—and your sister,—my sister, too, by and by. Is my little girl satisfied on that score?"

She was more than satisfied, and the next morning began a letter to Fanny in which she meant to tell of her engagement. Then, moved by some unaccountable impulse, she tore the letter up and wrote another, in which there was no word of Jack. At the end of two weeks Jack left for his last trip. Before going, however, he heard from the real estate agent in Richmond who had

charge of his house on The Plateau that some one wished to buy it and had offered more than the price at which it was held. "Will you sell it?" he wrote. Jack's answer was in the affirmative, and within a few days the house on The Plateau had passed from his possession into that of a Mr. Emery, whose instructions were that the keys should remain where they were, and that Jack should see that the place was properly cared for until such time as the owner came to claim his property. Just when that would be the agent did not know, nor did Jack particularly care. The house was off his hands, and he had in its stead a sum of money much larger than he had ever thought to realize from it. One key was to be left with Annie, as it always had been,—the other Jack kept, and together they went through the house the day before Jack started for the north. If Jack felt any regret for the past he did not manifest it, and stood apparently unmoved in *Our Room* and looked at the medallion smiling upon him and said how much it was like what Fanny was years ago. And he sat in the bay window where he was to have sat with Fanny and talked of the fine view to be had from it as unconcernedly as if he had not once felt all hope dying out from his future and leaving it black as night. It was very bright now, as with Annie at his side he gave one last look at the house which he had built, and then left it with no wish that things were otherwise.

The next day he went away and Annie was alone, but not lonely. She was too happy for that, and there were too many bright anticipations of the future when Jack should return. There were frequent letters from him full of the tender words a woman likes to hear from the man she loves. There were letters also from Katy and Miss Errington, who were in Egypt when the news of the Col-

onel's death reached them. Letters, too, from Paul, who was still in Paris and improving rapidly

"The poor little old Monsieur is dead," he wrote. "Had a cancer which made Madame so sick that she staid a heap in Paris at the hotel with us. Sam understands a good deal now, and says she said some of the flattest things to Carl about a lonely life and *trist* and *ah—me*, or something. Sam remembers the words and hunts them up in the dictionary, where he cannot always find them on account of the *tense*, you know. Then he asks somebody what they mean. Carl went to little Monsieur's funeral. She sent for him, and Sam said, 'I tell you I'm *fachey* about it.' I think he meant *mad*, and unknown to Carl he went, too, and saw the doings. It was an awful big funeral, and a grand chateau, and Madame was all in black and hystericky and leaned on Carl, who, Sam said, looked as if he wished she wouldn't. She is here now, and her heart is broken all to pieces with no one in the world to comfort her. Carl tries all he can, and sits with her a good deal, and once they drove out to the Bois and Sam said he should give Carl a piece of his mind. He did give it to him, and asked him what the folks would say if they knew he was flirting with an old French widow. Carl was mad and told Sam he was getting out of his place; but he don't sit with her now so much, and says he shall leave Paris as soon as it is safe for me to go, and Sam says he is going to ferret out *who* the woman is, as he don't believe she's first class."

There was also a letter from Sam himself, containing nearly every French word or phrase which he had picked up. There was a good deal about the "widder with yeller hair" who was trying to make a fool of Carl, and Annie was entreated to write him on the subject. But she thought it

wiser not to interfere. She had faith in Carl, and did not believe that a woman such as Madame was described to be could hold him long or do him material harm.

Every week there came a deep black-bordered letter from Fanny, who was very lonely, and reviled the practice of shutting one's self up like a nun because a friend was dead.

"If anybody needs fresh air," she wrote, "and glimpses of the world and diversion it is the mourner, sitting behind closed doors, when there is so much that is bright and gay outside, and I tell you I shall not stand it much longer, Grundy or no Grundy. I am like a bird shut up in a cage and longing for the green woods it can see but not reach. I will reach them, however. There are times when we should be a law to ourselves, and that is what I am going to do."

Chapter XIII.—Author's Story Continued.

A LAW TO HERSELF.

Three weeks after the receipt of this letter Annie had been up to the house on The Plateau, which was still untenanted, nor did anyone know when the new proprietor would take possession. Money had been forwarded with a request that if Mr. Fullerton were not there Miss Hathern would see that the house and grounds were kept in perfect order, as the owner might arrive at any time. Some flowering shrubs and choice plants were also sent, with the message that Annie could arrange them as she liked. Mr. Emery could trust Miss Hathern's taste from what he had heard of her. No mention had ever been

made of Mrs. Emery, who, if she existed, was more of a myth than her husband. In Jack's absence Annie had attended to everything, and the grounds at The Plateau were very beautiful in the warmth of the May sunshine as she went over them that afternoon, thinking what a lovely spot it was and how happy one might be there. For herself, she preferred her old home at The Elms. That needed painting and renovating, but Jack had said to her when she proposed attacking it, "Wait, and we will fix it together. There are several improvements I have in mind which I know you will like."

On her return from The Plateau Annie took the path through the woods, coming up to the house from the lane and past the old negro quarters to the dining-room door, where the expressman was unloading four immense trunks, —one a huge Saratoga, the others less pretentious and covered with foreign placards. Her first thought was that Katy had come, but the tall woman in black, with a veil which came nearly to her feet, was not Katy, but Fanny, who was giving directions and making herself quite at home.

"Why Fan," Annie exclaimed, "where did you come from?"

"Washington. Where do you suppose?" Fanny replied, following her trunks up stairs to the room she had taken for herself.

Removing her bonnet and fanning herself with it, she said, "I've come to spend the summer. I hope you are glad to see me."

"Of course I am," Annie replied, and she continued, "I staid in that great lonesome house until I couldn't stand it another minute. You have no idea what it is to be a fashionable widow, hedged round with custom.

Can't go anywhere or do anything without shocking the world. If I were poor with a lot of children and had to work for their living and mine, I should get out among people and see things and forget myself. But I am rich, and must follow the fashion or be talked about as heartless. It is dreadful moping at home until every room seems haunted, and you fancy you hear ghost steps on the stairs and behind you and beside you and everywhere, until you feel it would be a relief to hear George swearing again at Clary, or even at yourself, if he had been in the habit of doing so. I could not endure it, so I packed up and came home, where I can rest and do as I please, and wear what I please. I am so tired of this heavy veil, which pulls my head back, and gives me a feeling as if George were stepping on my gown and tripping me up."

As she talked she was removing the veil, which she threw upon the bed saying, "There, I am done with that. I can mourn just as well under a short one which does not jerk my head and make it ache. Once I thought I'd bring Marie, then I changed my mind. What do I want of a French maid here? I shall be glad to wait upon myself and you, too. Why, I believe I'd like to go into the kitchen and help Phyllis scrub and wash. It would be a change from having so many servants, with all the show and ceremony I once thought so fine, and which as Mrs. Errington, of Washington, I must keep up. Bah! *Husks*, the whole of it! I'm like the prodigal son come home again, with this difference, he came empty-handed, while I come rich, with no elder brother to be jealous. And I am so glad to be here,—to be Fan Hathern again. I wish they would call me that. Will the neighbors come to see me, do you think? And where is Jack?"

With that question Fanny sounded the key note of her

real reason for coming home. She had been bored to death in Washington and very lonely in the midst of her splendor. She was naturally very social and would have liked her house full of company. To be a widow in deep mourning, just bereaved, with all the restraints it implied, was intolerable, especially as she knew that at heart she was not the mourner she seemed to be. Had it been Jack for whom the crape was worn all the world would have lost its brightness, and her widow's weeds would have but poorly told of her desolation. But Jack was alive, and she believed cared for her still. She had treated him shamefully, and it was quite *en régle* that she should make the first advances towards a renewal of their former friendship. She had never cared much for conventionalities. She was a law unto herself, and if she chose to go to Lovering she had a right to do so, and there was no one to object. She meant to be very circumspect and not give the people food for gossip. George had been dead six months;—these would soon stretch into a year, and then——; she did not put into words what then,—but she had no doubt of it, and never had the future looked so bright to her as on her journey to Lovering, during which she was constantly assuring herself that there was no impropriety in what she was doing, and that if by reason of it she saw Jack at intervals and kept herself in his mind it was but the natural sequence of things.

There had been several days of rain and mist, but this had passed and the sun was shining bright and warm, and Fanny had never seen the house and grounds look pleasanter or more attractive than they did that afternoon when she drove down the avenue and began to feel a slight misgiving as to what Annie would say to her coming so

unceremoniously and taking possession. Annie's welcome was reassuring, and Fanny's spirits expanded wonderfully in the atmosphere and freedom of home, and she felt the burden of society's restraints slipping away from her. She had hoped that Jack might be in town and that she should see him that night, and in fancy she had gone over many times what she should say to him and what he would say to her. There would naturally be a little constraint on his side at first, but that would soon wear off and he would be the Jack of old in all except loverlike attentions. These she did not expect or desire at once. "I am not entirely lost to all sense of propriety," she was thinking when Annie came upon her, and for awhile turned her thoughts in another channel.

To her question "Where is Jack?" Annie replied by telling her of his long trip which might last some weeks longer, or might be soon ended. The day was not quite as bright after that and Fanny's face was clouded a little, but it soon cleared, and the next morning, save for her weeds and the absence of bright color from her face, she was the same light-hearted girl who used to flit about the house, ruling it with her imperious ways, but doing it so prettily that no one cared for the ruling. In less than twenty-four hours she was mistress, and Annie yielded to her and was glad to have her there, and the neighbors called and made much of her and she returned their calls and wore her short veil when she felt like it and when she didn't she left it off, and was as little like a disconsolate widow as it was possible for one to be. In the house on The Plateau she was greatly interested, asking many questions about Mr. Emery none of which Annie could answer. She did not even know where he lived. She spent the money he sent for improvements to the best of

her ability, and Fanny for the most part approved of what she had done. A few changes in some of the shrubbery she would suggest if the place were hers, she said, and as it was not too late to make them they were made, with the result of a better general effect. The Plateau had a great fascination for Fanny, who went there very often, sometimes staying for hours and sometimes just walking up to it for exercise, she said. One day about the last of July she was gone longer than usual and when she came back she seemed in unusually high spirits, and sitting down to the piano which she had not touched before began to sing Bonny Doon, Jack's favorite, which she was to have played for him in the home she had destroyed.

"Where do you suppose Jack is?" she asked, as she rose from the piano. Then, before Annie could answer, she continued: "I have half a mind to write him and tell him to hurry, as I want to see him. Do you think it would be improper?"

"It would depend upon your motive," Annie replied very quietly, and Fanny answered quickly, 'I don't know that I have any motive, except an inexpressible longing to see him and to know what he thinks of me. Annie," and Fanny grew very serious and breathed quickly as she went on: "I love Jack just as well as I ever did, and I want him to know it."

"Would you write it to him?" Annie asked, with a calmness which surprised herself.

"Why, no,—not exactly that; but something that would give him a suspicion of the truth. You think it unwomanly, I can see by your face," she continued, and Annie replied, "*I* would not do it for worlds, and your husband so recently dead."

"I tell you *that* does not count. Ours is an exceptional

case," Fanny said, with some asperity in tone and manner; "and how often must I say that I do not care for conventionalities. I am a law to myself."

"I don't believe I'd take the law into my hands in that way," Annie said, resolving now to tell her sister what she wished she had told her before.

A caller interrupted her, and when the lady left Fanny also disappeared and did not return for an hour or more. Then her face had an anxious expression such as it sometimes used to wear during the war when word came to town that a company of soldiers was in the woods, or on the distant plain. Supper was waiting for her, laid on the back piazza where she liked to have it when the evening was warm, as it was now. But she had no appetite. The orange shortcake, with its rich cream, which Phyllis had made expressly for her, was scarcely touched. She was tired and had a headache, she said, and very soon after sunset went to her room. Annie knew, however, that she was not in bed, as she heard her walking back and forth across the floor for a long time, occasionally stopping for a few moments and then beginning again as if too restless to keep still. When at last, at an earlier hour than usual, Annie went to her room, the walking had ceased, but there was a light shining over Fanny's door showing that she had not retired. It was a glorious night, with the moon at its full and the air sweet with the scent of flowers and the pines from the woods. Throwing on a dressing-gown Annie had just sat down by the window to enjoy the beauty of the scene, when there was a tap on her door and Fanny came in habited for bed, with a shawl thrown around her shoulders and her long hair falling down her back. Annie had extinguished the lamp, but the moon filled the room with light and

showed plainly the whiteness of Fanny's face and the drawn look about her mouth.

"What ails you, Fan? What has happened?" Annie asked.

Bringing a chair close to the window beside her sister, Fanny replied, "*This* has happened. I am an idiot,—a bold, shameless woman, who in being a law to herself has made a fool of herself. I have written to Jack,—not exactly a love letter, although it meant that, and he will take it as such. What am I to do?"

Annie was too much surprised at first to reply; then she said, "You have—written—a love letter to Jack!"

"Yes, I have,—or equivalent to that. I think it was Satan tempted me, and now he is laughing at me for the scrape he got me into," Fanny said. "I have been considering it for some time, arguing that there could be no harm in it, and this afternoon I took pen, ink and paper with me to The Plateau and wrote it *there*, in the window where I was to watch for him. I said more than I meant to when I began,—put it stronger, I mean,—and offered him half or all of my money, if he wanted it. I think the old Harry must have driven me on, I was so anxious to finish it and get it posted. I directed to care of the firm he is with in Richmond. On my way home I dropped it in the letter box, and was so happy that, as you will remember, I sat down and sang Bonny Doon because Jack liked it, and what I had done seemed to bring him nearer to me. Then to see what you would think of me I finessed a little and suggested writing to him. You disapproved and I was angry and thought you a prude, and half suspected you had designs on Jack yourself. That was the meanest part of it. While Mrs. Carter was calling I kept thinking what I had done and it didn't look to

me as it had at first. I saw with your eyes, and something told me Jack might see it that way, too. The fear kept growing until I was nearly wild, and thought Mrs. Carter would never be done telling what good and bright children she had and be gone. I had thought of a way out of my dilemma, if I were not too late and that woman did not stay forever. She did stay and I was too late. I went to the post office and said I'd like to withdraw the letter I posted two hours ago. The mail was gone, the postmaster said, and grinned at me impertinently, I thought, as if he knew what letter I meant and thought it queer that I should write to Jack. I know my face was scarlet and it has burned ever since. Do you think he will despise me?"

Fanny's voice was choked with tears as she made her confession, and then putting her head in Annie's lap cried like a child. She had done a foolish thing, driven on to do it by an impulse she did not try to resist and which impelled her to write more than she had at first intended. Jack was told how she had suffered for her treachery to him and how, through all her suffering, it had been a comfort to believe that he still cared for her, and that without such belief she should have died.

"Perhaps it is unwomanly in me to write this," she said, "but I cannot help it, and I am longing for the time when I shall see you again. I shall know by your face if you still care for me or not. If not, call me 'Mrs. Errington,' if you do care, call me 'Fanny,' when you first meet me, and I shall understand."

Then she spoke of her money,—more than she could ever use,—and said nothing would please her better than to give or loan a portion of it to him, if he wished to use it in his business. She closed by signing herself "Yours as always, Fanny."

It was a letter that any man would understand, and Fanny's regret at having sent it was so bitter that Annie tried to comfort her by saying that as Jack was constantly moving from place to place he might not get it, especially if, as was possible, he came home sooner than he had expected to when he left. This was a straw, but Fanny clung to it while Annie debated in her mind whether to tell of her engagement as she ought to have done long before.

"I believe it would kill her to tell her now," she thought. "I'll wait and possibly—"

Here the little sting, which she had thought gone forever made itself felt. Possibly, when Jack knew from Fanny herself that she loved him, and when he saw her again he might regret he was bound to her, and then?—

She could not answer any more than she could say to Fanny "Jack belongs to me."

"You are cold," she said at last as she saw Fanny shiver and draw her shawl closer around her. "Go to bed and trust Jack, who will do right, whatever happens."

"But the shame of it,—the shame of it. You would never have done it," Fanny answered, as she rose slowly and kissing Annie good-night went to her room.

Neither of the sisters slept much, and Annie the least. Regret that she had not told Fanny of her engagement when she was in Washington, and a morbid dread of the possible future, kept her awake long after midnight, and both she and Fanny were tired and white when at a later hour than usual they met at the breakfast table. As usual Fanny was the first to rally. She had dreamed that Jack came upon her unexpectedly at The Plateau and found her in her chair by the window, not watching for him as she did not expect him, and had no thought he was

near until he came behind her and kissed her, saying 'Fanny!' in the old-time voice, which sent through her such a thrill of ecstacy that she awoke and had not slept since. This she told to Annie, her face glowing with excitement, while Annie made no reply.

"I know what you think," Fanny said. "You don't believe Jack will be quite so ready to respond as all that, but something tells me he will."

Her feeling of shame was wearing away, and in a few days she was as gay as ever, and Annie often heard her humming Bonny Donn, and once she tried Dixie, which Jack had said she rattled off so fast. The weather now was very hot and sultry, but the sultriest, hottest day found her at The Plateau, which one would have thought she owned from her interest in it. She would not acknowledge that she believed in dreams, but the one in which Jack figured so largely had made a strong impression upon her, filling her with a presentiment that it would come true, and at The Plateau, too. Every day she went there and sat in the bay window of *our room*, sometimes reading, sometimes half-dozing, and always with a thought of Jack coming up behind her and saying softly, not 'Mrs. Errington,' but 'Fanny,'—a word which would mean all heaven to her.

Chapter XIV.—Author's Story Continued.

FANNY OR MRS. ERRINGTON.

It was in Boston that Jack received Fanny's letter, together with one from Annie, which had followed him

from Montreal. He recognized Fanny's handwriting and wondered why she was writing to him. Annie's letter was of the most importance, and he read it two or three times and kissed her name when he finished it and said aloud " My Annie, my wife that is to be. I shall see you very soon."

It did not occur to him that there was in it a little note of pain scarcely perceptible to one who did not hold the key, but still there, for Annie's heart had been sore when she wrote it. Easily affected by the atmosphere around her she could not help being more or less moved by Fanny's oft repeated assertion that Jack would forgive her everything and that they would meet on the old footing, and when she looked at the brilliant woman lovelier now than she had ever been, for to her beauty of face and person was added a grace and elegance which she had lacked in her girlhood, she said to herself, " How can he be insensible to her? "

And this affected her spirits when she wrote to Jack, who was quite oblivious of it all.

" Now for Fanny's letter," he said, when Annie's had been put away, and breaking the seal he read it with many and strange emotions, the most prominent of which was surprise that it should have been written.

Then, as he remembered how impulsive Fanny was, acting usually on the spur of the moment and repenting afterwards, he understood better, but was sorry, for her words awoke no answering response in his heart. The chords which had once thrilled to her slightest touch were stilled forever, and nothing she could do would stir them into life again. She had tried to be guarded, asking only for his friendship as she had it when they were girl and boy together, but he read between the lines and saw the

love offered to him and the feeling of assurance that it would be accepted. Some men would have rejoiced to return in part the pain they had been made to suffer, but Jack never harbored malice.

"Poor Fan, I am sorry for you," he said, "but it is too late; my love for you can no more be resurrected than The Boy you wept over years ago. I am your friend always, but never your lover again."

Then he began to wonder how he should meet her, and to wish she were not at The Elms, and why Annie had not told her, as she ought to have done. Fanny's offer of money he resented, although knowing it was well meant. "Money, always *money*, as if that were all,—but, thank God, I do not need it, and if I did, I'd starve before I'd touch a dollar which came this way," he thought, and without reading the letter a second time he tore it in pieces which he burned in the gas and then blew the ashes away with his breath.

Poor Fanny, singing snatches of Bonny Doon,—putting aside all regret for what she had done, and making herself believe that in a general way her dream would come true. She had had it three times,—not always the same in detail, but the same in substance, and it must come true. It did not occur to her that this was the natural result of dwelling upon it so constantly and having it in her mind before falling asleep. It was a sign for good and she grew brighter every day, and every day went to The Plateau near train time and sat in the willow chair and watched and waited for Jack, with a feeling that he would certainly come.

And he did come, but not by train. He had business in Petersburg, and after it was transacted drove to Lovering. The road led past The Plateau, and as he had not

seen the place for some time he dismissed the carriage which had brought him from Petersburg and walked up the hill to The Plateau. The rear door stood open, and with no thought that Fanny was there, but a hope that he might find Annie, he went in. There was no one below stairs, but on a table in the parlor lay a white scarf which he recognized as Annie's. She was there, of course, and he went up the stairs whistling as he went and calling softly, "Annie, my darling, where are you? Don't you hear me coming?"

No one answered, for Fanny was asleep. She had sat in the bay window two hours or more reading and thinking, until, overcome by the heat and lulled by the drone of insects outside and the gentle soughing of the wind through the two tall pines which stood in the grounds, her book had dropped into her lap, one hand had fallen at her side, and her head lay back upon her chair, with her face turned a little to one side. Had she posed for a month she could not have selected a more graceful attitude in which to be found by a lover than this in which Jack found her. He saw her as he crossed the threshold, and still thinking it to be Annie went very cautiously towards her, starting as he came close to her and drawing a long breath. That head was not Annie's. Her hair was brown; —this was much darker. Neither was that hand Annie's. Hers was smaller and not quite so white as this one, which he had kissed so many times and for which he had bought a wedding ring, now put away forever. There was another on the hand,—a broad band of gold, guarded by a costly solitaire, which, as a ray of sunlight struck it, blinked up at him with glints of color as if it had been a human eye asking what he did there He knew this was Fanny, and he came very near speaking her name. Then

remembering the construction she would put upon it he restrained himself, and stepping in front of her stood for a moment looking at her as she slept, and noticing what changes had been wrought in her since he last saw her on the platform of the car, waving good-bye to him. She was, if possible, more beautiful now than then,—with a kind of patrician beauty he felt but could not define. Her figure had lost some of its girlish symmetry, but had gained in a greater fullness of outline, partly the result of nature and partly owing to the skill of French dressmaking. He had never seen her asleep before, and had not realized how long and heavy were the dark lashes resting on her cheeks. He saw them now, and saw, too, the incipient lines around her mouth and eyes and the few threads of silver in her hair, and was conscious of a sensation such as we feel when we see a lovely rose begin to loose its freshness.

For a full minute he stood looking at her with no stir in his heart, or longing for possession. And he was glad it was so. If there had been a regret for the past, or a desire for the future, he would have felt himself disloyal to Annie. But there was none. She was only a beautiful woman, of whose unconsciousness he was taking an undue advantage. It was time to waken her, and he involuntarily gave a whistle with which he used to notify her of his presence on the piazza when he was a boy and she a girl like the picture in the medallion. The sound awoke her instantly and fully, and starting up she looked at him with eyes in which her whole soul was showing, but in which there was no surprise. Her dream had come true. Jack was there! *Her* Jack, with the same handsome face and honest eyes she remembered so well and with something more, — something which contact with the world had brought to him. She had called him countrified many a

time, and made fun of his coats and pants and shabby hats, but Col. Errington's clothes had never fitted better nor been worn with more grace than Jack's were now. There was, however, nothing of the dude about him. He was simply a well-dressed man after the fashion of the city rather than the country. And Fanny saw it at a glance and was glad.

"Jack!" she said, stretching her hands to him and forgetting for an instant what was to have been the password between them, if he had received her letter.

He had not forgotten, and taking her hands and smiling upon her, as he would have smiled upon any friend not seen for a long time, he said in his old teasing way, "Well, Sleeping Beauty, the beast took you unawares. I hope I did not frighten you."

He was perfectly self-possessed, with something about him, aside from his clothes, which Fanny had never seen before. As a girl she had asserted her superiority over him, as she did over everyone, and in his blind love he had submitted to her will and confessed himself an ignoramus whom she was to teach. Now he was a man to be respected and feared, rather than dictated to and taught.

Old Phyllis had been wont to say, when she saw Jack's perfect obedience to Fan's slightest whim, "I clar for't, Miss Fanny done tote Mas'r Jack roun' by de nose shameful." That time was past. He had opinions of his own, and after they had talked together a few minutes Fanny realized the change and began to feel that Jack might be the ruling spirit now. He had called her neither Fanny, nor Mrs. Errington. Evidently he had not received her letter, and she was glad, for with this changed Jack beside her she began to feel all her shame and regret for having sent it returning to her. This Jack would hardly receive

it as the old Jack would have done. He might think her unwomanly and immodest, and her hands worked nervously together as she talked on indifferent subjects, scarcely looking at him, or, if she did, blushing painfully and letting her eyes fall at once. She never dreamed it would be so hard to talk with Jack as she found it. She had thought that all she had to do was to see him,—to smile upon him in the witching way she knew so well, and then their former relations would be at once re-established. Now he was there with her, in the house which was to have been hers, —in the room where she was to wait and watch for him, and she was more ill at ease and constrained than she had ever been in her life.

"It is the letter which makes me so cowardly, and which he must never read," she thought, and after a moment she said with a gasp, "Ja-ack."

"Yes," he answered, as she did not go on at once.

"Ja-ack,—I sent you a letter ten days ago. I hope you did not receive it."

"No?" Jack said, more as an interrogative than an assertion.

But Fanny understood the latter, and went on more cheerfully; "I am so glad. Promise me that if you do receive it, as you may some time, you will bring it to me unopened and unread."

She was looking at him entreatingly, waiting for his reply, which came quickly:

"If your letter ever comes to me I will surely bring it to you unread."

Unconsciously he had laid a little emphasis on the *if*,—or there was something in his face or voice which told Fan the truth.

"Jack," she began again, and this time in a tremor of distress, "*did* you get my letter?"

With her eyes confronting him as they were Jack had no choice left him.

"Yes," he replied.

"Oh, Jack, what must you think of me?" Fanny cried, covering her face with her hands, while the tears trickled through her fingers and fell upon her black dress. "I don't know why I did it," she went on rapidly, "only I longed to let you know how I hated myself for the wrong I did you, and for which I have paid more dearly than you know. I could not help writing the letter after I began to think about it, and I hurried to get it off, and when Annie expressed her disapprobation I was angry."

"Did Annie know you wrote it?" Jack asked in some surprise, and Fanny replied, "Not until it was posted. Something she said opened my eyes to what I had done. It was like waking from a dream, and I went to the office to withdraw it, but it was gone. After awhile I was glad I had sent it, or at least not sorry, and I made myself believe that you would call me Fanny when we met in token of perfect forgiveness and was happy in the thought. I wrote it here in this room,—in this window, where I was to wait and watch for you. You see I know it all. I made Annie tell me everything, and if my heart had not been dried and seared it would have broken for you,—*Jack, for you.*" There was a sound in her voice as she said "For you, Jack; for you," which would have stirred Jack mightily and made him take her in his arms, if the past and Annie had not stood between them.

"I came up here into this room," she continued, "and on my knees expiated my sin, if anguish and tears can do it. I had not cried in so long that I thought I should never cry again. That was before George died. I never loved him;

he knew I never did, but I was faithful to him, and he said I was kind. He left me all his money,—so much more than I can manage or know what to do with and I wanted you to have some of it,—wanted you to forgive me and take it from me."

In her excitement she had laid her heart more bare than she had done in her letter. Jack had understood that; —he understood her now and pitied her for the pain he must inflict. At the mention of money his face clouded and his voice was harder than it would otherwise have been, as he said, "How much you mistake me, if you think I could take your money,—*his* money. You mean it kindly, I know, and so far I thank you. I am not as poor now as I was when you shrank from sharing my poverty, and if I were, you must see that I should accept nothing from you. I do forgive you, Fanny. It is impossible that I should feel otherwise than kindly to one who was so much to me once that the whole world was full of her, and I had no thought of anything which was not connected with her."

Fanny was not crying now, but listening with her head upon the table where his arm was resting while he toyed with a fancy paper-knife, the last article he had bought for her. He had found it in Richmond and brought it to the room the morning of the day her letter came. He was thinking of this and of everything connected with that time. Perhaps this was why he spoke so plainly. He did not mean to wound her unnecessarily, but he did mean to remove from her mind all hope that things could ever be again between them as they had been.

"You have no idea," he said, "of my happiness that day when I brought Annie here. It was as if all Heaven had come down to make its abode in this room where the

blow fell, and I felt as if my blood were leaving me drop by drop until I was one great block of ice. Heavens, how cold I was, and I never was warm again until the Florida sun shone on me as I sat on the sand at noon, with my head uncovered, hoping the iceberg would thaw."

Fanny was now sitting bolt upright, her eyes growing larger and blacker until, as Jack went on, she felt her blood oozing away drop by drop and leaving her the iceberg Jack was describing. She was warm enough later on, as Jack continued: "I have never felt unkindly towards you, Fanny, and had you come into this room that night and asked me to forgive you and spoken to me and looked at me as you have looked and spoken now, I have no doubt I should have taken you back, I loved you so much. Even now you stand to me in a different relation from any woman in the world, for you embody the memory of something in my early manhood which was very sweet. I would go through fire and water to serve you, but the past is dead. You have been the wife of another man, and I shall soon be the husband of another woman."

Fanny's face was spotted, but it turned as white as the bit of muslin she wore at her throat when Jack added, "Annie is to be my wife."

"Annie! And she never told me!" Fanny gasped. "I'll never forgive her, never!"

Jack knew she would, for it was not her nature to harbor malice against anyone, and especially against Annie, who was a part of herself. But the blow had struck her hard. She was so sure of winning Jack that she had never thought of a possible rival, and that rival Annie. Now, however, she began to read backward and to see what in her blindness she had not seen before. For a few minutes resentment against Annie was uppermost in her mind.

"She should have told me; it would have saved me all this shame," she said. And mentally Jack agreed with her, although he would not say so, lest he should seem to be blaming Annie. But he was sorry for Fanny. All her hopes were dead. Jack was gone from her past recall, and the world looked very desolate stretching on into the future year after year, while she walked in it alone. Then with a great effort she controlled herself and, smiling at Jack through her tears, she said, "Never was there a woman more abased and crushed than I am, but I shall not die. I am too plucky for that. If you wanted revenge you have had it. I think we are quits, and now I am going home to have it out with Annie, and that will end it. Don't come with me. Wait till evening when the storm will be over. My tantrums never lasted long, you know."

The next moment she was gone, and Jack saw her taking the path through the woods to The Elms. "Annie is somewhat to blame, but I hope Fan won't scratch her eyes out," he thought, as he started for the village in another direction. There was no danger of that although Fanny was very indignant, and rushing into the house like a cyclone she plunged at once into the fray. It was nearly supper time, and Annie was in her room making some changes in her toilet when Fanny came in banging the door behind her and standing with her back to it as she told in part what had transpired at The Plateau.

"Were you engaged when I came home at Thanksgiving?" she asked, and Annie answered "No."

"Were you engaged when you came to Washington?"

"Yes."

"Then, why didn't you tell me, and not let me prate about Jack as I did, showing how much I cared for him?"

"Just because you did show me how much you cared for him," Annie replied, roused at last to defend herself. "I tried to tell you two or three times in Washington, but could not. It did not seem just the thing to parade my happiness before you then, and tell you I had won the lover you jilted and whom I was sure you hoped to win back."

Annie was speaking very plainly, and without looking at Fan went on: "There was another reason,—a stronger one. I knew how Jack had loved you, and jealousy, perhaps, or some other ignoble feeling, whispered to me that now you were free, he might turn to you again, and this has been the mainspring of my silence, which I regret exceedingly. I might have written it to you, and did begin one or two letters, but tore them up, saying to myself, "I'll give Jack a chance to see her, and if after that he wavers ever so little towards me I shall know it and give him up. I could not share a divided love. I must have all of Jack, or none. When you came home you were full of him and so sure of him that I could not tell you. If I had known you were going to write to him as you did, I should have mustered courage and stopped it. I did not know until it was too late, and, like a coward, I waited to let Jack decide for himself."

"Which he has with a vengance," Fanny interposed. "You ought to have heard him talk to me till I could have crept on my knees out of his sight, I felt so small and ashamed. It was kind, perhaps, to take such heroic measures to cure me, but not like the old Jack whom I could twist around my little finger. He isn't that Jack at all. I couldn't twist him now. I should be afraid of him. I was afraid of him, as I sat listening to him, but never respected him so much in my life. I have had one man

of whom I stood in fear. I don't want another. You are welcome to him. He would have come home with me, but I told him to wait till I'd had it out with you. I've had it out. It's the only mean thing I ever knew you do, but I forgive you and hope you will be happy. Of course you will, but Jack will be the master. I shouldn't like that. You will. If I were you I would take off that brown thing which is so unbecoming. Put on a white gown this hot night. You are lovely in white. Jack is coming, and you want to look your best."

Fan's anger and resentment were wearing off. She had played her game and lost it, and as she had once said in an emergency, there was no use crying for spilled milk, she wouldn't cry now. Jack was still Jack, and Annie was Annie, and she could not afford to quarrel with them. They were engaged, and she would do what she could to further their happiness, and would begin by improving Annie's personal appearance. The brown gown annoyed her, and she made Annie put on a white one and fixed her hair more as she wore her own and fastened a rose at her neck and kissed her, saying as she held her off for inspection, "All you need is a little style to make you a beauty, but just as you are any man might be proud of you and glad that you were his. Jack is, I know. I believe I hear him. He has come early. Go down and have the first cooing over before I get there. Tell him the eagle has not harmed his dove. Go."

She pushed Annie from the room, and then falling upon the bed, with her face down and her hands clinched, she lay there a long time, fighting the hardest battle of her life, while below stairs the cooing went on and Annie was nestled in Jack's arms, with her head upon his breast, while he chided her for not having told Fanny and saved

her from so much mortification. But he covered her mouth with kisses while he chided, and she knew he was not angry. "We must be married very soon now," he said energetically, as if afraid that Fanny might carry him off bodily if he waited. He had nothing, however, to fear from Fanny, who, having fought her fight and conquered, was quite herself when she at last came down to the supper which had waited so long that Phyllis's turban stood higher than Fanny had seen it before since she came home. Fanny had made Annie as attractive as possible, and then had twisted her own hair into a fashion very unbecoming to her. She had not worn her widow's cap since she came to Lovering, but she brought out one now, and perching it on the top of her head surveyed herself in the mirror with a grim kind of satisfaction. She could scarcely have told why she did this, unless it were from some Quixotic idea not to overshadow Annie in Jack's eyes. She did not yet understand how wholly she had lost his love and how absolutely Annie had won it. Jack was not much given to noticing one's dress unless it were very pronounced. He had thought Annie uncommonly pretty when he came suddenly upon her watering a lily by the door, but he did not think of associating her prettiness with her dress or the arrangement of her hair. She was Annie,—his Annie,—whom he had not seen for weeks, and he kept her at his side until Phyllis asked if they was "never gwine to be done wid dat ar an' come to supper."

With the sound of Phyllis's voice there came also the soft trail of Fanny's long dress on the stairs. There was a good deal of dignity in her manner as she entered the room and took her seat at the table, meeting with a smile Annie's look of surprise at the cap on her head and the

way in which she had twisted her hair back from her high forehead.

"Lord save us, what has de chile done to alter her like dat ar," came from under Phyllis's breath, while even Jack wondered what had changed her so, and finally attributed it to the cap, which seemed so out of place on her.

Fanny did most of the talking, and when supper was over went to her room, leaving Jack and Annie alone, as she knew they wished to be. She was not one to do anything by the halves. She had given Jack up to her sister and she meant to make the best of it, and as to her the best seemed to be to remove herself from their way she very soon found Lovering quite too hot for comfort, and decided to go to the White Sulphur Springs with Marie.

"Maybe I shall come to see you married, and maybe I shall not," she said to Annie. "I can't tell how I shall feel. If I do come you may think I have a good deal of inward and spiritual grace. I ought to have something to sustain me, for between you and Jack I have been pounded to a pummice. Even George would be satisfied, if he knew. Poor George! he wasn't the worst man in the world."

She was getting up quite a little sentiment for her husband's memory and talked of him a good deal, especially to Jack, during the last days of her stay in Lovering, and she persisted in wearing her cap and twisting her hair in a fashion which Annie thought horrid. Once at the Springs, however, there was a change. The cap disappeared,—the hair came back to its usual becoming style; there were narrow bands of white at the neck and wrists of her black dresses, and among the guests there was no one half so much admired and sought after as the beautiful Mrs. George Errington of Washington.

Chapter XV.—Author's Story Continued.

THE TENANT AT THE PLATEAU.

Jack had decided that his marriage should take place some time in October, and soon after Fanny left he made arrangements whereby he could leave his business for a while and join the party in Europe for the winter. Nothing could please Annie better, and she immediately wrote to Fanny asking if she would go with them.

"Not if I know myself," was her prompt reply, "and you are crazy to ask it. A real honeymoon in Europe, such as your's and Jack's will be, must be delightful, but you ought to be alone. Think of me,—Jack's first love,—stalking along with you! No, thank you. And don't think I am eating my heart out with disappointment. I am not. I felt stunned at first to find myself so completely stranded, but there is a good deal left for me to enjoy yet. It is something to be admired and complimented and sought after as I am here, even if they are simpletons, or fortune-hunters, who do it. The wedding is the 20th of October, is it? Well, I have decided to come and do the honors, and I am going to bring you a diamond pin and ear-rings, and make over to you Carl's present to me three years ago. He meant it for Jack's wife, and Jack's wife shall have it. Give him my love, dear old boy. Don't be jealous. He is a dear old boy, and you are sure to be happy with him. Going on the Celtic, are you? We went on the Celtic, and our stateroom, where Jack's eyes haunted me so, was No —. Funny if you should get it."

"Jack," Annie said, the first time she saw him after

the receipt of this letter, "have you engaged our state-room on the Celtic?"

"Yes."

"What is the number?"

"No —."

"Oh, Jack, can't you change it?"

"Change it! They told me it was one of the best rooms on the ship. Why should I change it?"

"I don't know," Annie said, holding Jack's hand and rubbing her head against his coat sleeve, "I don't know, —only that's the room Fanny had when you haunted her so with your eyes. Maybe the Colonel will haunt me."

"Humbug! If he does I'll pitch him overboard. Don't go to being nervous, little woman," Jack replied, swinging her up in his arms as if she had been a child, and kissing her till she struggled away from him.

That day Jack received a letter saying that Mr. Emery had sold the house on The Plateau to a lady,—a widow,—who would probably take possession about the first of October. As she might arrive unexpectedly, she would be obliged if Mr. Fullerton would leave the key of the house with the station-master where she could get it at once. "A lady and a widow," Annie said, her interest and curiosity piqued and increased by the fact that neither the name nor whereabouts of the stranger was given. Everything pertaining to The Plateau was as much a mystery as ever, but busied with her preparations for her wedding and journey abroad Annie forgot The Plateau, until one morning when Jack came in and told her that the lady of The Plateau had come on the early train from Richmond. He had not seen her, but some of the villagers had and described her as in deep mourning, with a thick veil over her face, hiding her features from

view. A stalwart negro, who seemed to be her factotum, had gotten the key from the station master, and called a carriage into which he put his lady and a white girl, presumably her maid. Besides the big negro there were three more servants in the party and they were now domiciled at The Plateau. This was exciting, and the excitement was further increased by the rumor circulated by some black who had been to The Plateau to the effect that the servants were all a stuck-up lot of city negroes, —that the big one was a *butler*, and the white one spoke some foreign gibberish and wore a cap.

"Who can the lady be?" Annie wondered, and when, the next day, Jack proposed a drive past The Plateau she assented readily, hoping she might get a glimpse of the stranger.

It was a warm afternoon, and as they drove slowly up the hill they noticed that every window of the house was open, while the servants seemed to be busy going in and out. A box of flowers stood in the bay window of *our room*, and near it a bird's cage was hanging, showing that the owner had appropriated the chamber to herself.

"There she is," Annie said, as the figure of a tall woman passed before the window and was gone before Jack had a view of her.

"Who do you suppose she is?" Annie asked, and in the next breath exclaimed, "Jack, what are you doing? You certainly are not going to call!"

"I certainly am," he replied, turning into the grounds, while Annie continued to expostulate.

"But, Jack, it's so soon. What will she think? I haven't any cards, and you do not even know her name."

"We will learn it, then," Jack said, springing from the buggy and helping Annie to alight.

They went to the front door, where Jack was going to enter unannounced.

"Are you crazy?" Annie said, giving a pull to the bell, which echoed through the whole house and brought at once the white maid who spoke the foreign tongue.

"*Marie! Marie!* How came you here?" Annie gasped, beginning to understand and looking enquiringly at Jack, whose face told her that he knew whom they had come to see.

"Tell your mistress that Miss Hathern and Mr. Fullerton are here," he said, and with a bow the girl departed, meeting her mistress on the stairs and saying something to her in French.

The next moment Fanny was in the room, half laughing and half crying as she tried to explain.

"I did not want the place sold to strangers, and bought it myself, or had Mr. Emery do it for me. I have owned it all the time."

With Jack present she could not say that when she bought it she had a hope that she might some day live there a portion of the year with him. She had taken a great fancy to the house the first time she saw it, and had anticipated the day when as Jack's wife she could give it to him and say "We will still live here, and you shall see me from the window waiting and watching as you come over the hill." That dream was ended, but she would keep the place as the sepulchre of her hopes and Jack's, and when she was tired of Washington, as she was often likely to be, she would come to The Plateau as to a kind of Retreat, where she could rest and be near her old home. Mr. Emery had bought the place in his own name and then conveyed it to her, and she had furnished the means with which to keep it up, and had put it in Annie's care

and Jack's until she chose to appear as the real proprietor. A good deal of this she told to Annie and Jack, the latter of whom understood what she omitted.

"And here I am," she added, with a smile which belied a pain in her heart if there were any. "I've come for the wedding and can be mistress of ceremonies, and have brought Annie the loveliest gown, cream satin, and veil and orange wreath. You will be married in church," she continued, as she saw Annie about to protest. "I know you meant to have a quiet, poky thing at home, with ginger-bread and lemonade, but my sister shall have a wedding that is a wedding, and one which will make the people stare. You certainly ought to let me have my way in this."

There was no use combatting Fan when she was as much in earnest as she was now, and Annie did not try, but yielded to her in everything.

The next two weeks were busy and exciting ones in Lovering, where the people gossiped and commented, and messages were sent every day over the wires to Richmond and Petersburg, and Fanny drove about the town; to the caterer's, the florist's and The Elms, where Annie's dress was making by a modiste from Richmond.

"Now you look like a bride. Full dress becomes you," Fanny said, when at last Annie stood ready for her bridal, the creamy satin falling in soft folds around her slight figure, which gathered height from the length of the train.

The diamonds Fanny had brought lay in their case upon the bureau, and on Annie's neck were strings of exquisite pearls which Fanny had fastened there, saying "They are more like you than the diamonds, which will do for other occasions." Fanny was spending her money like

water and Annie was not the only one who benefited by it. Grand as she was in her bridal robes, Phyllis in her way was grander still and far more conscious of herself.

Fanny had not only bought her a wonderful turban of crimson and orange, but also a black silk dress with a short train. A negro in silk was something which Lovering had not reached with all its strides towards freedom, and some of the people disapproved and said so privately, while the blacks were loud in their denunciations, saying "Phyllis was nuffin but a nigger, if she did war silk."

Phyllis held her own and carried herself as if she owned the house and the church and the rector and the whole business, and walked like a duchess behind the bridal party under the canopies which Fanny had ordered from Richmond. The like had never been seen in Lovering, and a crowd of whites and blacks gathered at the church around the *tent*, as they called it, discussing the guests as they arrived. Nothing could exceed the beauty of the house and grounds that night. There was no moon, but there were Chinese lanterns and lamps and torches everywhere, making it almost as light as day outside, while inside it was like a great garden of flowers, wagon loads of which had been sent from Petersburg, together with a brass band which at intervals played on the wide piazza, around which hundreds of lookers on were assembled. It was an affair not soon to be forgotten, and to this day the stranger in Lovering is sometimes told by the blacks of the grand doings when Miss Annie Hathern was married to "Mas'r Fullerton, him as has been to congress twict sense, and is the firstest man here;" of the band and the *tents* and lanterns and fireworks and the *canterer* from Richmond, and of old Phyllis's silk gown in which she felt so big. More blacks than Phyllis have worn silk in

the reconstructed south, but she was the pioneer in Lovering and fully realized the *éclat* of her position, making a most imposing figure as she moved among the staff of trained servants which filled the kitchen that night and with whom she had more than one fierce battle.

What Fanny felt no one could guess. She seemed very happy as she did the honors of the house, her black dress in sharp contrast to the creamy satin of the bride who looked so lovely and young as she stood by her husband's side and received the congratulations of her friends. This was on Wednesday, and as they were to sail on Saturday the bridal pair left The Elms the next morning amid the cheers and good wishes of the crowd of people assembled to see them off. Fanny was not with them. She had said good-bye at the house and then been driven to The Plateau, where, alone in her room, with her face buried in her hands, she rocked to and fro, moaning to herself, "Oh, Annie,—oh, Jack. It is very hard to bear. I am glad you are happy; but how desolate your going has left me and how dreary life is to me now."

PART IV.

KATY AND CARL.

Chapter I.—Annie's Story.

IN THE OLD WORLD.

When I first awoke at Langham's in London and looked from my window the fog was so thick that I could see nothing but the gas jets flickering faintly in the gloom, seeming not much larger than the smallest taper. It was what the English call beastly weather and a very *narsty* day, for a cold, drizzling rain was falling and adding to the general discomfort, but to me it was glorious sunshine, and has been ever since the night Jack made me his wife. What a grand wedding we had, and how the people must have gossiped about the expenditure,—the canopies,—the carpets,—the caterers,—the flowers,—the lanterns and lights and music which made the place fairyland, in the midst of which I walked like one in a dream, knowing only that Jack was by my side,—that the people were calling me by his name,—and that I was perfectly happy. Occasionally I caught a glimpse in a mirror of a little brown-haired woman, gorgeous in satin and pearls and lace, with a fleecy veil sweeping the floor as she walked, and was conscious of wondering who she was, and thinking she was rather pretty, though not like Fan, the queen of the evening.

How wonderfully beautiful her face was, beaming everywhere and always with that smile, the brightest I have ever seen. Poor Fan! I pitied her the next morning when she said good-bye to me. The roses were gone from her cheeks, and her eyes were so sad as she kissed me and said "God bless you, Annie, and bring you safely back." Then she turned to Jack and involuntarily put up her lips. He kissed her and I was glad. There can be no jealousy of her now. Jack is mine, and I say it over and over to myself so many times. Mine,—my Jack, who grows dearer to me every day. If there are storms on the sea I do not know it from experience, for the ocean was like a lake and our crossing like a dream. We had the same stateroom where Fanny suffered so much, but although Jack's eyes were on me a good share of the time when I was awake they did not trouble me, and I always smiled back at them when I met their gaze.

We did not go to Morley's, but to the Langham instead, although the former is the more central of the two. I think the fact that Col. Errington stopped there decided Jack against it. He never speaks of the man and very seldom of Fanny, who has left The Plateau and gone back to Washington. I think we saw everything in London, even to the Queen and the Princess; and we went everywhere,—not to dinners and receptions as Fanny did, for we knew no one, but to every place of interest of which I had ever heard. And it was such a delight to see things with Jack, although I think I tired him out, as I used occasionally to hear him groan and see him put his hand on his back as if it ached when I suggested Mad. Tussaud's, or the theatre, in the evening after we had been out all day. In the museum he was specially listless, saying life was not long enough to see all there was there, and he

used frequently to sit down and tell me he would rest while I examined the coins and stones and things for which he did not care a red. But at the Tower and the Abbey and St. Paul's he was wide-awake, and knew so much more about the old dead kings and queens and people buried there that I felt myself quite an ignoramus beside him.

We staid in London two weeks, and with the exception of the first few days the weather was as clear and fine as it is at home in November. We had letters of congratulation from Miss Errington and Katy, who were in Berlin, and were to join us later in southern France or Italy. Katy had sung twice at parlor concerts and had received overtures for a public engagement at a high price if she would take it. But she declined, actuated, as I afterwards learned, by the remembrance of Carl's last words to her, implying that she must choose between his good opinion and her Career. She had an aptitude for foreign languages, and before going abroad had studied both French, Italian and German, and had applied herself so assiduously to them since that she could render almost any song in the language of the country, her English accent only adding piquancy to her singing. Had she been sure of Carl she might have gone upon the stage, knowing that with her innate purity and sense of propriety she could have maintained her integrity of character against all odds and resisted temptation in every form. But Carl's "Then good-bye" was always present with her, much as she tried to put it from her and to tell herself that he was nothing to her, and she nothing to him, and might, if she chose, be a law unto herself.

Carl had staid in Paris until Paul's cure was assured, if care were exercised for the next few years. Then he

started suddenly for Switzerland, where, in Lucerne, he met Katy, who, with Miss Errington, was at the same hotel, the Schweitzerhof. She was undeniably glad to see him, and her eyes told him so and brought back all the love he had ever flet for her. There were walks under the chestnuts which skirt the lovely lake,—trips up the Rigi and Pilatus, with excursions into the country. Katy's loveliness had expanded and deepened like the rose when the morning dew lies upon it. And Carl had drank in her beauty and sweetness eagerly, like one thirsting for something pure and good and a better life than he had known, but as often as he opened his lips to say the words he wanted to, she seemed to know it and either managed to withdraw herself from him, or to talk of something else until a third party joined them. She had never forgotten the summer which meant so much to her and so little to him, and had also heard rumors of the French widow, which she resented, and held herself from him in such a manner that love-making was impossible. She had given up her Career for him, or thought she had, and his record must be as spotless as her own and he as single-hearted as herself, if she ever accepted him, and when at last she left Lucerne his words of love were still unspoken and she seemed as far from him as ever.

Chapter II.—Author's Story.

MADAME.

By some chance the train which took Katy and Miss Errington away brought Madame Felix, greatly surprised and delighted to meet Monsieur Haverleigh and *le petit*

garcon, who she had no idea were in Lucerne. All this she said in very broken English for the benefit of Sam Slayton, who confided to Paul that Madame was an infernal liar and more dangerous than ever. Possibly Carl thought so too. It was such a change from Katy to this woman who, by her delicate flatery and tacit appeal for sympathy, had fascinated and controlled him against his better judgment. He had left Paris without letting her know where he was going, and had breathed freer when the Jura mountains divided him from her. When with her she absorbed him entirely and held him with cords he could neither understand nor loosen. Away from her, he could rebel against her influence and the ownership of him which her manner implied. He was her *good American friend*,—her *adviser*,—her *brother*, since she lost her dear Felix, whose name she never mentioned without her handkerchief going to her eyes in token of her sorrow.

At the Grand Hotel where she had spent much of her time since her husband's death she had been sitting one evening with Carl in the court near some English people, a part of whose conversation they overheard as it related to themselves. "She has him sure,—more's the pity;—her husband hasn't been dead so very long;—he don't look quite the chap to be roped in by a widow older than himself," were the disjointed sentences Carl caught, and which Madame with all her ignorance of English understood. Carl flushed angrily and was about to move away when, with a shrug of her shoulders, Madame laid her hand on his arm and detained him, saying, "Stay where you are. I will go, if either; it is I they aim at, these nasty English. I hate them;—not to understand that we are friends, nothing more. Absurd to think different, and

I so much older than you;—many years,—two, three, four perhaps. I am twenty-seven, and you? You are quite a boy compared to me."

Carl did not reply. He knew she would never see thirty again, and he did not fancy being called a boy.

"I will go to Passy and bury myself, if it annoys you to be friends with me. Shall I?" she continued.

Carl told her he didn't care a *sou* for the English or what they thought, and she was not to go to Passy on his account. She did go, however, the next day,—called there suddenly on business which took her to Marseilles. Left to himself Carl began to think, and as a result of the thinking he packed his trunks and left Paris without leaving his address at the hotel, an act for which Sam gave special thanksgiving and dropped a piece of money on the plate at St. Eustace's, where he was in the habit of going to hear the music. If Carl hoped to be rid of Madame in this way he was mistaken, for she found his address at his banker's and started at once for Lucerne.

"I believe she is the devil," he said to himself when he saw her alight from the railway carriage, affecting a pretty air of invalidism as she came towards him.

She had been ill in Marseilles, she said, and her physician had ordered her to Switzerland for a change of air, "and here you are, at the Schweitzerhof, I suppose. All the swells go there. I was once there a month with dear Felix, but now,—" she hesitated a moment and then went on: "I did not write you the nature of the business which took me so suddenly to Passy and Marseilles. I knew your good heart would be so sorry for me. Felix was not as rich as I supposed. He has a brother to whom he owed a great deal of money and who had a mortgage on the chateau. He is there now, and I,—I am poor. I must go to the Cygne, where it is cheaper."

She said all this very rapidly, with a tear or two on her eyelashes, which might have dropped on her nose, if she had ever done so unbecoming and vulgar a thing as to let a tear stand upon that organ. She had the rare faculty to cry just when she wanted to, and also to keep her tears where they would do the most effective work. Naturally she did not go to the Cygne, but to the Schweitzerhof, and took a parlor and bedroom and seemed anything but poor. She was, however, very quiet, and mixed but little with any of the guests, except Carl. Over him she speedily resumed her influence to some extent. She was so bright and original and said such amusing things, and always made him feel at his best with her delicate flattery, which seemed so sincere that he could not resist her.

"Katy stands on so high a plane of puritanism that I can't touch her with a ten-foot pole. I always feel like a cad with her, while with Julie I am satisfied and believe myself a pretty good fellow," he thought, and drifted again into an atmosphere he knew was unhealthy and one which he would not like Katy to breathe.

Of himself he would not have told Julie that Katy had been there; but Madame heard of her from Paul, who was full of Katy, so beautiful, he said, and Carl loved her so much and sat with her under the chestnuts and rowed on the lake, and everything. Others than Paul talked of the lovely American who had sung for them one night in the parlor as no one had ever sung in Lucerne before. Every guest in the house had come in to hear her, while a crowd had gathered outside to listen. Madame smiled sweetly as she heard all this, but there was fierce jealousy in her heart of this young girl who had come between her and Carl. He might never marry her, she knew, but she would bind him to her with one of those Platonic friend-

ships which French women delight in, and which would remove Katy from her path almost as effectually as marriage would have done.

"American women are so prudish," she thought, "and cannot understand that a man and woman can be everything to each other and still be perfectly correct. Once let Katy believe there is something between us not quite *au fait*, and I have nothing to fear from her."

Still Katy troubled her, and she felt an irresistible desire to talk of her to Carl, but always on the assumption that she was his sister and nothing more.

"They tell me your sister is very beautiful and sings divinely. I wish I might have seen her. You must be proud of her," she said to him, and he answered, "She is beautiful, and I am proud of her."

Madame understood at once that he would rather not discuss Katy with her, and her eyes shone for a moment with a dangerous light, as she said next, "You must love her very much?"

To this Carl made no answer, and Madame continued: "She was very young, I believe, when your mother went to The Elms, was she not?"

"Yes, very young," Carl replied, wondering vaguely how Madame knew so much about The Elms as she sometimes seemed to know.

"Paul has told her a great deal, I dare say," he thought, and then, at a sudden turn of Madame's head and a lifting of her eyelids there came to him a misty kind of feeling, such as he had several times experienced, that somewhere he had seen just such a poise of the head and heard just such purring tones as belonged to Madame Felix.

He had never spoken to her about it, but now, glad of anything which would turn the conversation away from Katy, he asked abruptly if she were ever in America.

"In America!" she answered with great energy. "*Mon dieu! Jamais!* America, Monsieur?—nothing could tempt me to cross the sea. I die upon the Channel. Why do you think I have been in America?"

"Because you remind me of some one I must have seen," he said, "and just now when you were talking of Katy I could almost think who it was."

"Impossible that you could have seen me. Impossible!" and Madame shook her head very decidedly, but said no more of Katy, either then or afterwards.

Carl was going to Homburg from Lucerne, and when he told Madame of his intention she declared it to be the very place where she was expecting to go, hoping the waters would do her good and where she knew of an inexpensive *pension.*

"I must retrench now," she said. "Nearly every letter I get brings worse news than the one before with regard to my fortune, which I thought so large. I really ought not to have staid at this hotel, and but for the accident of meeting you should not."

Carl understood her, and with his usual generosity offered to pay her bills, and when she declined with horror from putting herself in so questionable a position, especially as she had no Felix to protect her, he felt almost as if he had insulted her and promptly asked her pardon, offering as a loan what her self-respect would not allow her to take as a gift. This she accepted, and a week later found her in Homburg, whither Carl had preceded her by a few days.

CHAPTER III.—AUTHOR'S STORY CONTINUED.

AT HOMBURG.

CARL had expected Madame to go when he did, but with a very pretty throwing up of her hands and a shrug of her shoulders she had exclaimed "Mon dieu, Monsieur, if all the world were as unsuspicious as you what a delight to live. But there are more vile English than those we met in Paris. Homburg is full of them, and I must be discreet. Should we go together they might talk, and I owe it to Felix's memory to avoid the very appearance of anything like an understanding. You will go first, and I shall follow. There can be no harm in that."

For the life of him Carl could see no harm in their traveling on the same train, while going purposely at different times looked as if there were something to conceal, and, so far as he was concerned, there was nothing. But he acquiesced and left her in Lucerne, promising to look at the inexpensive *pension* she named, and to engage a room for her if it were not too second-classy and he thought she could endure it. She hated *pensions*. She had staid in one or two after the Commune when the French aristocracy fled for their lives. She detested them then, but must get accustomed to them now in her changed circumstances, she said, and remembering this Carl found the inexpensive *pension* too second-classy to suit Madame, for whom rooms were engaged at the ——— Hotel, which enjoyed the prestige of having the Princess Christian dine in its garden every night, accompanied occasionally by her brother the Prince of Wales. There was at first a pretense on Madame's part of protesting that she must

not take the rooms. She could not afford it, but Carl quieted her with another loan and the matter was finally amicably adjusted.

It was astonishing to Carl how many people Madame knew at Homburg. Friends of other and happier days, she said, as she presented them to him. Some of them had titles, some seemed very well-bred, while others were rather seedy, Carl thought. They all paid homage to Madame, who soon had a little court around her and forgot to weep for Felix as much as she had done. As an American Carl felt himself the equal of anyone, and still in his heart there was a kind of respect for rank and aristocracy which made him overlook any little idiosyncracies of manner and action in Madame's friends. It was this same feeling which had drawn him more closely to Madame herself. He knew that Monsieur Felix's family was good, and without saying it in so many words Madame had insinuated that hers was equally as good. If he had ever doubted this he believed it in Homburg, where she knew so many titled people, and he was not a little proud to be one of her set. Sam suspected them of being sharpers, especially after he found how much time they spent with cards in Madame's private parlor. Carl was usually with them a looker-on at first. He had never played for money in his life, and for a few days his New England training and the memory of his mother restrained him. Then Julie persuaded him to take a hand with her just for once.

"The stakes are not very high and I nearly always win, and Count de Varré is ill to-night," she said, and Carl sat down and won and gave his winnings to Madame.

Then he tried his hand again and won till Madame had quite a little sum at her command. Naturally social, Carl

found Madame's friends very agreeable and amusing, especially the ladies, one of whom was young and unmarried, while the other was a widow and a baroness and took snuff and talked loud and wore big diamonds. They all made much of Carl, whose fortune rumor, as usual, had doubled. Every night they played, sometimes in one private salon, sometimes in another,—and Carl frequently was one of the party. When he played with Madame he usually won, not very much,—but still won,—and when he played against her, he lost,—sometimes heavy sums, which made him shiver a little when next day he gave his cheque for the amount, and all the time Sam Slayton watched them as closely as if he had been a detective.

One night they met in Carl's salon, Madame playing with Count de Varré and the old baroness with Carl, who lost, but kept on playing until Sam, who had persisted in staying in the room and at a little distance had been watching the game closely, suddenly exclaimed, as he caught Carl's arm, and prevented him from putting down a certain card, "Great Jerusalem, don't you know they are all in league and fleecing you? I learned a trick or two in the army, but never thought to see it practiced among decent people."

Madame, the only one who understood Sam, nearly fainted, while the Count sprang to his feet, demanding angrily the cause of the disturbance and why this boor of a fellow was allowed with gentlemen, and what he had said.

"He said you were cheating at cards, and by George I believe he spoke the truth," Carl answered, the mists suddenly clearing from his moral perceptions and showing him the danger he was in.

The scene which followed was rather lively, the Count

denying the charge and hurling angry invectives against Sam, who, not comprehending a word, met them with Yankee coolness and indifference, but stood his ground manfully and showed *how* the cheating was done, while Madame protested that if there had been cheating she was not a party to it, and begged Carl to believe her, and became at last so violently hysterical that, whether he believed her or not, he made a pretense of doing so.

"It was as plain as the nose on your face," Sam said in describing it to Carl. "I can't say that Madame cheated, but the others did and gave information across the table in the most barefaced way. I told you they was sharpers."

Carl began to think so too. Possibly Madame was innocent. He was inclined to think she was, but it was a very questionable kind of people to whom she had introduced him, and he resolved to break away from his Homburg associates,—cleanse himself from their atmosphere,—and then find Katy, confess everything to her, and sue for the love for which he was beginning to long so intensely. To leave Madame, however, was not so easy to do. Since the episode in his room she had been very despondent, and while affecting to be indignant at the Count, had clung more and more to Carl, and always spoke of going when and where he went as a matter of course. In this respect an accident favored him. He was not very fond of early rising, and seldom joined the crowds which went to the Springs before breakfast. He had been there once with Madame, who never missed a morning, and once with Paul, who went to see the Prince of Wales, and who, when he saw him, exclaimed "Why, Carl, he's only a man with a white dog and gray clothes like Sam's,"—a remark which greatly amused those who

heard and understood it. After that Carl staid in bed and left Paul to go alone with Sam to see the Prince and his white dog.

One morning as he was waiting for them to return and wondering why they were so late Sam came rushing into his room, exclaiming, "Hurrah, now's your time to cut and run! Madame has broken her ankle and will not walk for weeks. We had a great time getting her to the hotel. Took me and the Count and two lords, and all hands. I tell you, she's solid!"

It seemed that in going to the Springs for her eight glasses of water, Madame had somehow slipped and broken her ankle in two places and was brought to her room at the hotel in great agony. It was impossible not to be sorry for her and for a day or two Carl staid by her, seeing that she had every attention and comfort. Then he announced his intention to leave Homburg, which had become so distasteful to him that he hated himself for being there and was anxious to get away. Just where he was going he did not know, but he had Copenhagen in mind, with Stockholm afterwards, and possibly St. Petersburg and Moscow and Warsaw, if it were not too late. Madame's ankle would keep her a prisoner for some time in Homburg, and the trip he contemplated was far too expensive for her to undertake. She could not follow him, and he felt as if a great weight had been lifted from him and left him a free man as the train took him away from Homburg and the people whose influence had been so pernicious. He would like to have joined Katy, but did not think himself worthy yet to stand in her presence and meet the glance of her innocent blue eye.

"I must be washed and boiled and ironed first," he thought, and after a few days' stay at Frankfort, where

Sam affected to live in constant expectancy of seeing Madame come hobbling in on crutches, they left for Copenhagen.

Chapter IV.—Annie's Story.

AT MONTE CARLO.

All this happened in the summer and early autumn before Jack and I went to London and from thence to Paris, where the brightness and beauty of the gay city astonished and bewildered me. I did not know that anything could be as beautiful as its boulevards, its parks, its late flowers and fountains, and crowds of happy-looking people seen everywhere. Its shop windows were a constant delight, and Jack could scarcely get me away from them. Had we staid in Paris long I should have developed a great passion for dress. As it was I began to want everything I saw, until I inquired the price, when my ardor cooled a little. I was never tired of the picture galleries, or the Bois de Boulogne, or the Champs d'Elysées, or the Avenue de l'Opéra, on which our hotel looked, or of counting the number of white or gray horses seen in a day, and which sometimes amounted to a thousand.

The weather was cold, but crisp and dry,—the trees were leafless and the grass dead, but I did not mind it at all, and would like to have staid in Paris all winter, but for Jack, who wanted to move on.

Carl, who had been to St. Petersburg and Moscow was now in Berlin, while Katy and Miss Errington were in Monte Carlo, and urged us to join them.

"We are not here for play," Katy wrote, "although

there is a great fascination in watching it and the people, and when you see how easily money is sometimes won you are tempted to try your luck. But I have not done so, and shall not. I should be ashamed to look Paul in the face (I knew she meant Carl), if I had played with the men and women who nightly crowded the Casino. We are not in a hotel, but in a lovely villa which Miss Errington has rented. She is not strong,—is very tired with travel, and the air here suits her, while the town suits me. It is the loveliest spot in all the world, and like a garden every where, while the sea is a constant delight. Do come and join us. We have plenty of room and the weather is soft and warm as October at home. Norah isn't with us, but is coming soon. She found some cousins in Germany and wanted to *rest up* awhile with them. We miss her more than I can tell. She is so efficient and faithful. I doubt, though, if she gets along amicably with the servants here, and her shoes will undoubtedly creak some at their way of doing things. I am getting to be quite a gossip, or at least very curious about my neighbors, and so suspicious too. So many seem to be under a cloud. If you see a beautiful woman driving in a beautiful carriage, behind beautiful horses, with a young man beside her, and ask who she is, the chances are that the person you interrogate shrugs her shoulders and says, 'She is Lady *So-and-so*, separated from her husband, and the young man beside her is Lord *Somebody*, who owns the fine turnout and the villa she lives in and the diamonds she wears.'

"Then you feel disgusted and ashamed of your sex, but go to the Casino just the same to watch the play, and the haggish old women, with their black bags, in which they keep their gold and silver, and the young women, fair English and American girls, sitting side by side with

blear-eyed roués whom they sometimes touch in their feverish haste to gather up what they have gained, and put down more. Then, in spite of yourself, you look about till you find Lady *So-and-so*, painted and powdered, with the young man who owns the horses and carriage and diamonds and her, standing behind her while she stakes *his* money as coolly as if it were her own. By and by a friend, who knows everybody, calls your attention to a gray-haired man in the crowd and tells you it is Earl *So-and-so*, husband of the painted woman playing so recklessly. While you are hurrying to look at him you stumble upon another celebrity, who tried to kill himself and failed, and is now at the table again, with the perspiration rolling down his face and despair showing in his eyes. To-morrow he may finish the work he began a week ago, and there will be a fresh grave in that inclosure of suicides on the hillside.

"Miss Errington laughs at me, I get so excited, and interested in it all, particularly in our next-door neighbors, who occupy the grand villa which stands so close to ours that I can see all they do, and often hear what they say. It is a very gay party, of French and Germans; several gentlemen and three ladies, one of whom interests me greatly and seems to be the central figure. She is all in black, except when she wears a rose or some other flower to relieve her sombre dress. Her eyes are black, her eyebrows heavy, her color brilliant and her hair golden and wavy. She is slightly lame, and in the morning sits a good deal on the verandah on our side just where from my window I can see her distinctly, or could until she caught me looking at her through a glass. Impertinent in me, I know, but she fascinates me somehow with her complexion and hair and eyes. Maybe she didn't see me, but she

spoke to our cook that day and asked her who we were and since that she has sat further away with her back to me and her long hair rippling down to her waist as if she were drying it. She goes to the Casino every night, and once when I stood watching her she stopped suddenly and left her seat. People tell me that old habitue's are superstitious and will not play if strangers are looking at them.

"You must come soon and help me attend to my neighbors' business. Miss Errington is no good at all, and only laughs at my excitement, but she, too, says, tell you to hurry. We need a man with us to keep us from being talked about, as two lone women whom nobody knows."

After the receipt of this letter I was crazy to reach Monte Carlo and see Lady *So-and-so*, who was separated from her husband, and the Earl from whom she was separated, and the haggish old women with black bags, and the man who had tried to kill himself, and all the other questionable people of the place. Jack made no objection to leaving Paris, and in three days we were at Monte Carlo, said to be the loveliest and wickedest place in the world. I saw only the loveliness at first; and from the moment I began to climb the steep steps from the station to the terrace above I was one exclamation point of delight, and when I reached Miss Errington's villa, which looked out upon the sea and the Casino and Park in front, I was speechless with wonder that anything could be so fair as the scene around me. Miss Errington's villa was small, but exceedingly pretty, and stood on the same grounds with what we called The Grand Villa, while ours was *La Petite*.

It was late in the afternoon when we arrived, and I had just time to freshen myself a little before dinner was served. Katy had given us her room, which was larger than the guest chamber, and while making my toilet I was con-

stantly glancing from the windows toward the Grand Villa, the piazza of which seemed to be full of people in evening dress, and the sound of their voices was distinctly heard. Conspicuous among their light costumes was a soft, black, fleecy dress, the train of which reached far behind the lady who wore it, and whose face I could not see, as her back was towards me. I could, however, distinguish masses of golden hair piled high on the top of her head, with one or two curls falling gracefully in her neck.

"That is Katy's Madame," I said, as I tried to get a glimpse of her face, while Jack chaffed me for my curiosity.

Evidently it was a large dinner party assembled at the villa, and we saw them filing into the salon and seating themselves at the long table loaded with silver and cut glass and flowers. Then the shades were dropped, and hid them from our sight, but we could hear their merry laughter, louder it seemed to me and coarser than that of real gentlemen and ladies.

"I do not believe they are real," Katy said. "They are shams,—even if they have titles among them. Their *chef* told ours that Count de Varré rents the villa and they picnic together. The woman in black is Madame Felix. Paul has written me something about her. What do you know of her?"

I replied by repeating at length all I had heard of her. "I should not be greatly surprised if Carl joined the party later. He was at Homburg with some of them," I said, and repented my words the next moment, Katy turned so pale and looked so distressed.

"Carl consorting with such people and Paul with him; and you knew it and did not stop it!" she exclaimed, and in her eyes, blue as they were, there was a look like Fan

when her blood was at fever heat and her eyes at their blackest with red spots in them.

"What could I do?" I asked. "Paul is beyond my control when with Carl, and I do not believe he has been harmed. She has evidently been very kind to him and he likes her."

"Yes, I remember. I understand perfectly why she is kind to Paul," Katy replied, and I could hear her foot tap impatiently under the table, as she grew more and more like Fan. "If Carl comes to that villa with Paul, I'll never speak to him again," she added.

She was greatly excited and her excitement continued until dinner was over and we were on our way to the Casino. The party from the Grand Villa were just ahead of us,—Madame, with her black train thrown over her arm, showing clouds of white lace and muslin underwear, while the man who, Katy said, was Count de Varré, walked beside her, occasionally putting his hand on her shoulder when she limped more than usual. We purposely held back that they might enter before us; "and get well under way before Madame spies me," Katy said, a trifle viciously for her. "The last time I was here I went in when she did, and you should have seen the great black eyes she leveled at me for an instant, and then with a half shrug walked away. She didn't play that night while I was there. I believe she thinks I am her evil genius."

We were in the Casino by this time and I wanted to look about me a little, but Katy hurried us on to the play-rooms, ablaze with light and splendor and people gathered from all parts of the globe,—French, Germans, Russians, Italians, English and Americans,—young and old, beauties and belles, wrinkled hags and fair, innocent looking girls, who had staked their first five francs stealthily, as if

ashamed to do it,—their second, if they won, with more assurance,—their third, with still more, until at last every afternoon and evening, Sunday not excepted, found them there, sitting between and jostled by men to whom at home they would consider it a degradation to speak, or be near. At one table sat an old, shrivelled woman, playing heavily, but so blind and deaf and demented that she did not always know whether she had lost or won, until her maid, who stood behind her, told her, and raked the gold into her bag. At another table was a young man, an American, just married, and also playing heavily, but losing as heavily, while his girl-wife beside him looked on with tearful eyes and an occasional remonstrance as she saw what was perhaps their all melting away so fast. It was wonderful, and bewildering, and intoxicating, and as I went from table to table and heard above the hum of voices the constant sing-song of the croupier s "*Faite le jeu; le jeu est fait,*" and looked at the players and saw how rapidly the gold and silver changed hands, I could understand how strong was the temptation to try one's luck when only five francs was the stake and there was no possible chance for cheating or being cheated.

"Would you like to risk a dollar?" Jack said, to try the strength of my principles.

"No, indeed," I replied, just as Katy pulled my sleeve and whispered, "There they are,—the party from the Grand Villa,—all at the same table. Madame has her back to us. You and Jack go round where you can see her without letting her know you are watching her. By and by I'll come and hypnotize her so she'll quit playing. You'll see!"

We left Katy and went round to the other side of the table, getting as near to it as possible and, without seeming

to watch Madame, scanned her curiously. She was handsome, with that voluptuous kind of beauty so many men admire. She was quite tall and stout, but her figure was so perfect that one forgot her size entirely. I knew that she owed much of her brilliant color to art, but it was art perfected, as was the shading under her eyes which two or three times swept the crowd in front of her as if in quest of someone. I might have been mistaken, but I thought there was a look of relief in them as if the one they feared to see was not there. Once she smiled and spoke to the man beside her, Count de Varré, showing a dimple in one cheek and a set of very white even teeth. Her chief attraction, however, was in her golden hair which contrasted so strongly with her eyes and eyebrows. It was certainly a strange freak of nature,—that hair and those eyes,—and I said so to Jack, and asked him what he thought of her.

"She is striking, certainly," he said, "and just the kind of woman to please some men,—Carl, for example; but she is not my style, and by George, I believe I've seen her before."

"That is hardly possible," I replied, "inasmuch as she is a born French woman."

"How do you know she is a born French woman," he asked, and I rejoined, "I don't know for sure, but have taken it for granted. When Paul first met her she could not speak English. Don't you remember he wrote that he was teaching her?"

"English or no English, I have seen that woman before, or some one like her," Jack said.

He was good at remembering faces, while I was not good at all, and still I, too, was beginning to think that I had seen Madame, when Katy came up and said, "Now

let me have your place, while you step aside, and see how soon I can make her uncomfortable."

I stepped aside, standing a little to the right of Katy, whose face I could not see. But I saw Madame who, after a little, began to fidget in her chair and cast frequent glances across the table to where Katy stood, not looking at her all the time, but making it sufficiently manifest that she was watching her. Strangely, too, Madame began to lose. This made her more nervous than ever, and at last, folding her hands in a despairing kind of way, she said something to the man beside her. Following the direction of her eyes he saw Katy and at once came round to her. Bowing low he begged a thousand pardons, but did she speak French or English?

"Both," she said, and he continued, rubbing his hands and bowing all the time, "So sorry, but Madame Felix, the lady in black, is not well,—is nervous,—and it affects her much to have Mademoiselle look at her with those eyes, which,—pardon,—if I were not a stranger I should compliment."

Something in the eyes warned him not to compliment them, and he went on: "She loses courage; she loses money. In short, will Mademoiselle be so very good to go to some other table and watch somebody else. Am very sorry to ask it?"

"Certainly I will," Katy said, turning her back upon Madame, who recovered her composure and began to play again.

Jack and I were watching her now almost as intently as Katy had done and with a more startling effect. Evidently she had not been aware of our presence before, and now when she saw us she seemed for a moment spellbound and stared at me as if I had been some unexpected

apparition confronting her. Then she looked at Jack, who, I have always insisted, bowed slightly. He says he didn't, but confesses to a half smile which so disconcerted her that she turned pale and, leaning back in her chair, whispered to the Count and left her seat.

"You are worse than Katy," Jack said, with what sounded like a low whistle as he saw her going to another table as far from us as possible.

"I told you I would rout her," Katy said, as she joined us, while Jack declared it was I who did it. "She actually turned green when she saw Annie," he said. "Who the dickens can she be?"

"A miserable scheming woman," Katy answered, and I knew she was thinking of Carl and his connection with Madame.

I was getting tired of the play-rooms and we went outside into the vestibule where we sat down so near the entrance to the little opera that we could hear the music distinctly. I did not care to go in that night, preferring to sit where I was and see the people pass and repass. After a moment Katy said, "There is something I want to tell you and may as well do it here. I am going to sing in public to-morrow night."

"Sing in Monte Carlo,—in the Casino!" I exclaimed, and Katy replied, "In Monte Carlo, yes; but not in the Casino. There is a grand salon at the ——— Hotel capable of seating two or three hundred, and they are willing to give from two to five dollars to hear me sing, or rather, to be more modest, to the cause for which I am to sing."

"And what is that?" I asked in a tone which made Katy look closely at me as she replied, "You have some of Fan's prejudice against the stage, I see. Well, this isn't the stage exactly, although there is to be a temporary

one, I believe. Haven't you heard of that little town near here which has been visited with pestilence and earthquakes and lastly by a fire until it is half a ruin and the people sleep in the fields? The concert is for their benefit, gotten up and engineered by an English earl and his lady. So, you see, it is in every way *en règle*. All amateurs, except the tenor and the contralto, whose voices harmonize perfectly with mine. They are husband and wife and highly respectable. The other performers are English. I am the only American, and the drawing card!"

"What do they know of you?" I asked, and she replied, "I sang in Berlin and in Nice and once here. The Earl heard me in Berlin and Nice, too, and insisted upon my taking part here as prima donna. Now you have it in a nutshell, except that the rush for tickets increased and the prices went up when it was known that I was to sing."

"Don't you dread it?" I asked, and with a merry laugh she answered, "Dread it? No. I anticipate it. I know I can sing. I sometimes feel as if I could fill the whole world when I get my voice under control, and how I should like to try the Grand Opera House in Paris. I sang twice in Berlin in a concert hall to crowded houses. Just before I was to go on my heart beat like a big drum, but the moment I was on the stage and saw the people and they saw me and began to cheer, I forgot everything but my own voice to which I was listening, and which carried me back to the robins I used to imitate in the garden and woods at home, and it seemed to me that I was a big robin making my throat move just as they used to do when they sat in the jasmine and honeysuckle and sang to me in the morning. I imitated them then; I can

do it better now. You will see. You don't know how the people applauded and encored until I was tired of coming out, and when the concert was over they nearly broke through the floor, and so many came forward to congratulate me,—the Earl and his lady with the rest. The next day I was deluged with cards and calls and flowers, and had I chosen I might have commenced a career then and there, I had so many overtures for engagements with real stage people. I am glad I am to sing to-morrow night, and that you and Jack are to hear me. Fan said she'd rather see me dead than on the stage. Carl said so, too, but God gave me my voice. Why shouldn't I use it?"

"You should, for all good objects, but don't go in for a Career," I said.

"You are as bad as the rest of them; all are against me,—even Jack," Katy rejoined, glancing up at Jack, who had listened but said nothing, except to ask if we were not ready to go home.

Miss Errington, who had not been with us at the Casino, was waiting for us in the salon and there were lights at the Grand Villa, showing that some of its occupants had returned. It was Madame and the Count, Miss Errington told us, adding that they had come back sometime ago, and that, judging from the sound of Madame's voice, she was either excited or ill.

"She's seen the evil eye again," Katy said, recounting her experience with the lady, while Jack whistled just as he had done at the Casino, and was promptly reproved by me for his ill-manners in whistling before people.

"Don't you remember that girl we used to have?" I said, "what was her name,—*Julina Smith.* She used to whistle until Mrs. Hathern heard her and nearly took her head off."

"What made you think of her?" Jack asked, and I replied, "I don't know. She happened to come into my mind," and there the conversation ceased.

Chapter V.—Annie's Story Continued.

THE CONCERT.

The next day I saw that great preparations were making for the concert to be given in the grand salon, and heard from Miss Errington that much interest was felt by the Americans and English because Katy was to sing. Several times the Earl came to our villa to consult with her, and once the Italian tenor and contralto came and practiced one or two pieces, and Katy went with the Earl to the hotel to see just where she was to stand and where enter. Taken altogether, there seemed to be quite a professional air about it all which I didn't quite like, and I said so to Jack, who answered "Oh, let Katy sing, if she wants to. It won't hurt her."

"But what will Fan and Carl say? I wish he were here," I continued, whereupon Jack was more provoking than ever, and replied, "I don't think Carl need say much after his racket with Madame!" and then he whistled again in what I thought a very exasperating way and told him so, from which it will be seen that we were getting quite like married people.

For answer he laughed and said "*Nous verrons*," about the only French he had picked up, and I heard him laughing in his dressing-room where he was making his toilet for the evening. We went early to the salon, but early as we were the party from the Grand Villa were there be-

fore us, all except Madame, who was probably enjoying herself at play, undisturbed by Katy, or myself. We were not far from the front and could not see who entered behind us, but we knew the salon was filling fast and that some were standing near the door. Behind the curtain of the improvised stage shadowy figures were flitting, and we caught occasionally the sound of suppressed voices evidently giving orders. Jack had gone to the villa, after my fan which I had forgotten, and I had fought one or two battles over his chair and was longing for him to return and wondering why he was gone so long, when he came tearing in. I can use no other expression than *tear*, he was so excited and warm, as if he had been running. "By George," he said, handing me my fan and sinking into his seat, "It's the best joke I ever knew."

"What's the best joke? Are you crazy, Jack?" I asked, as he seemed about to roar.

Then he pulled himself together and answered quite soberly, "You wished Carl were here, and he *is* here,—in this hotel,—or was; came on the evening train. I glanced at the register and saw his name, and Paul's and Sam's. Norah is here, too, at the villa; came on the same train, but could not have known Carl was in it, as she said nothing of having seen him."

"Norah! I am so glad," Miss Errington said, while I exclaimed, "Carl and Paul! Then, they must be in the salon. Look, Jack, and find them."

He did look, and saying "*Nix*," sat down again, and continued: "Carl is undoubtedly in the Casino by this time cheek-by-jowl with Madame. She passed the villa with her maid while Norah and I were standing on the piazza. I got one flash of her black eyes in the moon-

light. She looked rather haggard, I thought, in spite of the color on her cheeks. I don't believe she half likes our proximity to her."

Then he laughed and was about to say more when I warned him to stop, as the orchestra had ceased playing and the curtain was going up. Everything which could be done to make the stage attractive and like a private parlor had been done. The furniture was of the daintiest kind and most artistically arranged; the lights were shaded just right, and there were flowers and potted plants everywhere, with a whole forest of palms, tall ferns and azaleas at the rear, where the singers were to enter.

The first on the programme was a quartette sung in Italian, and mildly cheered. Then a violin solo played by the Earl,—also mildly cheered, with a faint attempt at an encore. "Stupid," I whispered to Jack, who did not seem to be listening at all. Once, when there was a commotion near the door he turned his head and then said to me in a whisper, "That Yankee has just come in with Paul. He'll have a good time getting a seat."

I asked Jack to bring Paul to me, for I was longing for a sight of his face, and wanted to see what effect the sight of Katy would have upon him. But Jack said that was impossible.

"Are you sure Carl is not with him?" I asked, and he replied, "Yes, sure. He is probably at the Casino."

And he was! Since leaving Berlin he had traveled slowly from place to place,—not quite certain whether he was sufficiently scrubbed and boiled and ironed to join the girl whom he felt a great desire to see. He had heard of her triumphs in Berlin from some friends who were at the concert, and for a moment had set his teeth together hard that she should thus go against his known wishes.

Then he thought "Who or what am I that I should raise so high a standard for her, and have so low a one for myself? If she sings every day in the week I want her, and mean to have her."

Of Madame he frequently thought;—sometimes with disgust, when he remembered Homburg, and again kindly and charitably as one who was not to blame for being a French woman, with all the instincts of her class. She had amused and interested him, and shown that she cared for him, and no young man is wholly insensible to the preference of a handsome woman. Just where she was he did not know, but fancied she was at Cannes. Of Katy's whereabouts he knew as little as of Madame's, but had an impression that she might be in Monte Carlo, as in her last letter to Paul she had spoken of going there. If so, he knew Jack and I must be with her, as we were to join her in southern France, and with a hope to find her and us he had come on the evening train.

As our names were not on the hotel register he decided to look for us in the Casino,—the resort of the most of Monte Carlo's visitors. Paul knew he could not enter the play-rooms, but was anxious to see the place. Taking him and Sam with him Carl left them to look about in the vestibule, while he slowly made the circuit of the rooms. Not finding us, or anyone he knew, he decided to enquire at the different hotels and was about to leave when he came upon Madame who was so heartily glad to see him that for a time he was glad to see her. She was thinner than when he left her in Homburg, with something quiet and subdued in her manner, and a shade of anxiety in her face which softened and toned down her striking beauty.

"Is in straits again I dare say," Carl thought, resolving if she were he would not come to the rescue.

But Madame soon undeceived him. She had had splendid luck as a rule at the tables, and, best of all, her brother-in-law in Passy had been very generous and made over to her more of the estate than she had hoped for.

"I feel quite rich again," she said, "and can pay you what you have loaned me."

At this Carl laughed. She was welcome to all he had advanced to her, he said, as he took a seat beside her at one of the tables, more to see her play than to play himself. After a little, however, the fever seized him, and he was about to put down his first piece of gold when there came an unexpected diversion in the shape of a young boy, whose English voice rang out shrill and clear above the hum of the room and startled every player there.

"Carl, Carl, come quick! Katy is singing at the hotel, and the people are yelling like mad. Come on."

It was Paul, bareheaded and breathless, as he grasped Carl's hand before the gold was upon the table. In an instant Carl was on his feet, electrified by the news Paul brought and by the sight of him in those rooms so rigidly forbidden to all under twenty-one. Close behind him was an official, but before he could seize the child Carl interposed and led him into the vestibule, where he met Sam who had come in hot pursuit of the boy. Paul and Sam had looked about the Casino until they were tired and had then returned to the hotel, where they heard of the concert in progress, but not who the singers were. Paul, who was very fond of music, begged to go in, and securing a ticket Sam managed to find standing-room for himself at the rear of the salon, where, putting Paul upon the window seat so that he could see over the heads of the people, he stood, little dreaming of the surprise which awaited him. The quartette was finished and the solo,

and then there fell a great hush of expectancy as the people studied their programs and waited during what seemed to me an eternity, I was so nervous and excited.

Would Katy fail? Would she mind that sea of heads, or care for the eyes and glasses so soon to be leveled at her? I didn't know, and I felt as if I should scream if the suspense were not soon ended. There was a stir among the palms and azaleas, and something which sounded like a long breath ran through the audience, as a tall slim girl walked easily and gracefully to the front of the stage, where she stood, acknowledging the cheers which greeted her as composedly as if she had been at home and about to sing a ballad to me. She was very lovely in her simple white gown, with neither paint nor powder on her face. Her fair hair was twisted into a loose coil at the back of her head and kept in place by a long gold pin, her only ornament, if I except the bunch of roses fastened in her bosom. Nor did she need anything to set off the matchless beauty of her face and the light which shone in her eyes as they swept the house in one swift glance until they fell upon Jack and me. Then she began singing to *us*,—I was sure,—with a thought of home in her heart,—singing in a language I could not understand, but the music of which made me grow faint as a great joy sometimes affects us. I could feel the stillness of the people, which continued for a brief instant after she finished; then, there was a perfect hail-storm of cheers and flowers, which she received with the same composure which had characterized her singing.

It was at this point that Paul had started in quest of Carl. He had been very quiet, Sam said, through the quartette and solo, and was beginning to yawn when Katy appeared.

" Oh-h!" he began aloud, when Sam put his hand over his mouth to stop him.

Then putting his arms around Sam's neck and nearly strangling him Paul whispered, " Is it she? Is it Katy? It is! It is!"

Shaking like a leaf he listened till the song was over and then, before Sam knew what he was doing, he sprang from the window stool and started for the Casino to find Carl. Fortunately for him a party was just entering the rooms, and taking advantage of the open door he shot through it under the nose of the astonished official, who put out his arm to detain him. But Paul was off like the wind, darting from point to point until he found Carl and startled him with the news that Katy was singing at the hotel and the people were yelling like mad.

Madame was white to her lips as she watched Carl going from the room and knew that he was going from her forever,—the only man she had ever really cared for. Then she turned to her game with nerveless fingers which could hardly hold the gold which she lost as fast as she put it down.

Meanwhile Carl was hurrying to the hotel, questioning Paul as he went, but getting no very satisfactory replies. Katy was singing and the house was full, was all Paul could say. Carl had fancied it a little parlor entertainment, but when he saw the crowd filling the salon and all the scenic effect of stage accessories, he thought to himself, " Katy has commenced her *Career*," and a sting like the cut of a knife ran through him for an instant, with a feeling that he had lost her. With some difficulty he made his way to a window, where, with Paul again on the stool, he waited while an English girl wailed through some sentimental trash about " Kissing me quick if you

love me." Then there was another hush, reminding me of the stillness said to brood in the air before the coming of a cyclone. I believe I could have heard a pin drop, and I did hear the beating of my heart and leaned over on Jack just as the palms and azaleas stirred again, and the tall slim girl in the white dress stood before us a second time, her cheeks flushed with excitement and her face beautiful as the faces of the angels whose pictures we sometimes see. Two or three curls had escaped from the coil at the back of her head and fallen down upon her neck. These she tossed back with a graceful motion, putting up her hands to fasten them in their place as readily and naturally as if she had been in her dressing-room at home. She was wholly unconventional, and this was one of her great charms as she stood there, her eyes again sweeping the house, but failing to take in the group by the window watching her so eagerly, Paul only restrained from calling out to her by Carl's warning "sh-sh," spoken very low. If she had seen them and known Carl was there she might not have sung as she did, —clearer, sweeter than before,—going up and up without a break until she reached a point from which it seemed as if her voice could go no farther, and there it staid and warbled and trilled with perfect ease like the robins she used to imitate. And I was sure she saw and heard them, and that The Elms and evergreens and woods were full of them singing to her of Virginia and home, and she hated to leave them. But with an easy movement she slid down at last from the dizzy heights to which she had carried us, and with a bow her song was ended.

If the applause was great before it was thunderous now, and she stood as if wondering what it all was for. Then suddenly it subsided,—stopped by the same shrill, pene-

trating voice which had so startled the players in the Casino. Paul had nearly tumbled off the window stool with his stamping, and as soon as there was a lull he called out "Hurrah, Katy! That was splendid, and we are all here, Carl and Sam and *me*. Look!"

Three-fourths of the audience were English and Americans, who understood him, and all turned towards the window where the little fellow's hands were still in the air clapping his approval. Then the cheers broke forth again, louder than before, and this time almost as much for Paul as for Katy. She was as white as her dress, and it seemed to me had scarcely strength to leave the stage. In response to the protracted calls for her reappearance she only came in front of the palms and bowed. She was not down to sing again, but when the program was finished some of the English, who knew she was a southern girl, sent up a request for a negro song, such as was sung before the war. This everyone seconded and Katy came again, looking now like a water-lily she was so pale, as she stood for a moment wondering what to sing.

"I hope it will be Old Kentucky Home," I whispered to Jack, and as if my wish had been communicated to her she began it at once, without any accompaniment, filling the room with the old-time melody I had so often heard as a child in the hemp fields and cabins at home, but which had never sounded as it did now when Katy sang it with so much feeling and pathos.

This time I feared the people would break through the floor, and was told that the proprietor did look in alarmed at the noise. One more song was asked for and this time it was Swannee River which she chose, changing the words of the last two lines of each verse into

> "Oh, how my heart is growing weary,
> Far from my old Virginia home!"

There was now a difference in her singing which I was quick to detect. It was just as sweet and full, but she was tired and her voice showed it, and was like the home-sick cry of a child longing to lie down and rest in the sunshine and beside the running brooks of its distant home. And the people who knew she was from Virginia understood it, and there was scarcely a dry eye in the house when she finished. I was crying outright, while Paul by the window was sobbing on Carl's neck,—"Less go home; it's a heap nicer than here."

It was over at last. The people were hurrying out,—some to try their luck at the Casino before the doors closed, and all talking of the girl who had so delighted them. As soon as he could Jack brought Carl and Paul to me, and we made our way across the stage in quest of Katy. She had already gone to the villa, where we found her, limp and exhausted, lying upon a couch with Norah ministering to her and piles of flowers around her, tributes to her genius,—bouquets, baskets, horse-shoes, harps, —everything, except pillows and crosses, which would have made the room look more like a funeral than it did. With a shout Paul threw himself upon Katy, nearly strangling her with hugs, and saying, "Oh, Katy, how you *did* sing! It made me think of the angels first, and then I got sick at my stomach, didn't I Carl?"

Miss Errington, Jack and I had all congratulated Katy and kissed her, when Carl came up. At sight of him she started to rise, but he put her gently back, saying "Stay where you are and rest. You sang splendidly, Katy. I was proud of you," and then he, too, kissed her on her forehead. A wonderful light shone in Katy's eyes as she looked up at him; the tire all left her face, which was bright with smiles and blushes as she declared she was not fatigued at all.

"Just for a moment when Paul hurrahed and I knew he was there I did feel as if I should drop, it was so sudden,"she said, "but after that I was all right, and when I sang the Swannee River I was at home with the negroes, and a part of the time falling into the duck pond with Carl fishing me out."

"You were!" Carl exclaimed, bending over her until his face almost touched hers; "that's exactly where I was,—there and in the woods after you were ill."

He had somehow gotten possession of her hand and kept it until it was wanted to repress Paul, who, on the other side of the couch, was hugging and kissing her at intervals as the fancy took him. We were a very happy family, and sat talking together until Norah, the only sensible one among us, insisted that Katy must go to bed.

"There's another day comin', and its to-morrow now," she said, pointing to the clock which was striking one.

Sam had been in to see us, and in his characteristic way had expressed his approval of Katy's singing. The foreign lingo he didn't understand, he said, but the tune was tip-top, while Kentucky Home and Swanny River took the cake, and made him think of Mirandy and the little baby who died, and he snummed if he could keep from crying.

Carl, Paul and Sam went back to their hotel and the lights were soon out in the little villa. In the Grand Villa, however, there was one shining in Madame's room, and I could see her in full undress, moving rapidly about as if packing her trunks.

"I believe she is going away," I said to Jack, who gave his little tantalizing whistle, and replied, "Shouldn't wonder!"

Chapter VI.—Annie's Story Continued.

JULINA.

Immediately after breakfast the next morning Carl and Paul joined us, and as the day was unusually warm for the season we all sat in the verandah looking towards the Casino in one direction and the Grand Villa to the left. At this end of the piazza a large screen was standing, put there to shut us from the eyes of our neighbors, when they were sitting out as they often did. They were late this morning like ourselves, and if Madame were leaving it could not be until afternoon as the express train both ways had passed. Norah was everywhere present, and her shoes, which were new, creaked frightfully, showing an excited state of mind, although she was in high spirits and talked continually when near us. She had tried her luck at the roulette table the previous night, she said, and lost more than she won, but she didn't care. She saw the people and they saw her, and she guessed some of them were not greatly pleased to renew her acquaintance. We were wondering what she meant, when we saw Madame come out and sit down with her back to us at the farthest end of the long piazza. Before seating herself, however, she glanced furtively around as if to assure herself that she was not observed. Our position was such that through a space between the screen and the side of the villa we could see her without ourselves being seen. I was the nearest to the screen and was looking at her when I heard a very decided "Ah-hem!" twice repeated as if to attract attention, and leaning forward I saw that Norah had crossed our part of the grounds and was standing on

those of the Grand Villa, evidently *Ah-hem-ming* to the woman in the distance, who sat as immovable as a stone. When the coughs did not prevail, Norah called out, "Halloo!—halloo! How are you this morning?"

Jack whistled, while Katy and I looked aghast at each other. "Say, why don't you speak to an old friend?" came next from Norah, and then Madame partly turned and said, "If you are talking to me, it's no use. I understand little English."

Jack whistled again, and Carl, who was sitting close to Katy, rose to his feet and took a step forward as if to stop Norah's impertinence, but her next remark kept him motionless as it did the rest of us. Norah had picked up enough French to understand Madame, and straightening herself back she answered: "The Lord save us! Born in *Vermont*, and can't speak English! That's too much, but you don't cheat me. We worked together in Miss Haverleigh's kitchen too long for me not to know *Julina Smith*, in spite of your painted hair. I heard of you from your Cousin Jane, who is in a hotel in Dresden, where my sister is cook. She told me you're a great lady and all that, but I didn't spose you'd refuse to speak to me and say you didn't know English. That's nonsense. Come and see the folks from Virginny. They're all here but Miss Fanny."

We were all outside the screen now, and standing upon the grass—except Miss Errington, who had no special interest in the matter, and Carl, who, at the mention of Julina Smith, had dropped into his chair, where he sat while we went out to meet our former maid. She was very pale as she rose up and faced us, with the look of a hunted animal, which has been run down and sees no way of escape. She had played her game and lost, and

now she made the best of it and came towards us at once, moving slowly as if in pain. Paul had always been fond of her, and when he saw who she was he ran forward with a shout.

"Oh, Madame, Madame, I'm so glad," he said, and threw himself into her arms.

This seemed to reassure her Kissing the little boy she held him by the hand and came up to us, as far from the Grand Villa as possible. She was very pale and the dark rings under her eyes were not works of art, but the result of anxiety and loss of sleep. She spoke very low, but every word was distinct and in perfect English.

"Yes, I am, or was, Julina Smith," she began, "and I have worked in Mrs. Haverleigh's kitchen with Norah, but society would recognize me as your equal now, and it is your boast in America that one can rise if he has the will to do it. I had the will, and I have risen. When I came to France my aunt had sold what I called her chateau near Fontainebleau and was keeping a Pension in Paris. She gave me advantages and I profited by them. We had the best of people, mostly French, and among them Monsieur Felix. He was much older than I and very rich, or I thought him so. He was a good man,—not very deep, —but good. He loved me and married me, thinking me wholly French and that my name was Julie Du Bois. He never knew I was born in America, or could speak English. If he had he wouldn't have cared, he was so fond and proud of me, but he might have told of it and that I wished to prevent. My aunt died. I had no relations left in Paris to betray me,—no relatives this side of the water, except Jane, who is only a second cousin, and I went to work to lose all traces of my former self. Partly as a disguise, and partly because I thought it would give me a

more striking appearance, I bleached my hair. You remember my teeth. No one could forget them. I had them extracted and went for a new set to a famous American dentist. He did his best for me, and when I gained in flesh, as I soon did, the metamorphose was complete, and deceived even those who had been at my aunt's Pension and knew me as the young girl who sometimes played for them to dance. These I did not often meet. I avoided everyone I had ever known, in my morbid fear of being recognized. My husband's family is a good one, and as his wife I was somebody and I enjoyed it and passed for a lady,—as I think I am."

She smiled bitterly here, and then went on: "When I first saw this dear little boy," and she passed her hand caressingly over Paul's head, "I was drawn to him at once, and my affection for him was not feigned. I was glad to see Carl again and afraid he would know me, but he didn't. I sometimes thought his man Sam suspected me and knew he did not like me. He lived in the same town with my father when I was a girl."

"Jerusalem! I told you so," came energetically from Sam, who had come from the hotel and seeing us standing together had joined us in time to hear a part of what Madame was saying.

To him she gave a look of scorn, as one quite beneath her, and then went on, a little stammeringly now, for she had reached the hardest part of her story, and her eyes went over and beyond us to the piazza where Carl's boots were visible as he sat motionless, but listening to every word.

"I was glad to see Carl," she said again, speaking as if something were choking her. "I always liked him as a boy, although he was very proud,—so proud that

had he known I was Julina, my changed position as Madame Felix would hardly have atoned for the fact that I once served his mother. I am a woman and human, and it was a gratification to know that I could interest and attract him and I tried my best to do it, with what success he can tell you. But," and here she fixed her eyes on Katy, " I never found him anything but a true, honorable man, whom any good girl might trust. I think I amused him, but he was not of my kind. His New England training unfitted him for my set and he broke away from us. Better for him that he did, although we lead a very happy life as a rule. I am half French by birth and all French by nature and habit. Bohemian French, too, and like it. The life suits me. It couldn't suit Carl. There is too much Puritan there. He is happier with you, and there is no reason why you should not take him as readily as if he had never known me. I saw your sister in London two years ago and avoided her. I did not know you were my neighbor here until I learned your name. I had no fear you would recognize me. You were too young when I knew you, but you troubled me greatly in the Casino, though not as much as you did;" and now she addressed me: " I did not know you were in Europe, and when I saw you and Mr. Fullerton I felt that my time had come. I was sure of it when I heard Norah's voice last night as I passed on my way to the Casino and saw her later in the rooms. I might deceive everyone else, but Norah never."

" That's as sure as you're born," came from Norah, and Madame went on: " I meant to leave this morning, but the rest of my party go to-morrow and I waited. I am glad I did. Glad I have told you all, and you may not believe me, but I am so glad to see you again, and I wish we were friends, but that we can never be."

"Why not?" Katy said, going over to the woman and offering her hand.

Madame's confession and what she said of Carl had wiped out all her animosity, and she felt only pity for the woman who had been so humiliated.

"Oh, Katy, Katy!" Madame exclaimed, bursting into tears and throwing her arms around Katy's neck. "I do not deserve this from you. God bless you, and make you happy. Carl is worthy of you, even if he has been soiled a little by contact with me. It is only a speck which your love will wipe out. I tried to make him care for me but could not. He was never more to me than a friend."

All this she said very low, as she continued to cry.

There was a stir at the end of the long piazza of the Grand Villa. The Count had come out and was looking curiously in our direction. In a moment Madame was herself,—erect and dignified and speaking in a whisper.

"We leave to-morrow. It is not necessary that my party should know everything or anything They despise the *bourgeois;* they would despise Julina Smith. They think I come from a good old Norman family, now extinct. Let them continue to think so. I shall tell them I had met some of you before. I know what to say;—trust me, and—good-bye."

She wrung Katy's hand, kissed Paul and went across the lawn and piazza to where the Count stood waiting for her. What she told him we never knew,—something satisfactory, no doubt, as he was driving with her that afternoon, and in the evening we saw him by her side at the gaming table in the Casino. But we didn't disturb or go near her. Early the next morning piles of baggage left the Grand Villa, and we were up in time to see Madame's black bonnet disappearing through the shrubbery as she went down to the station.

"Good riddance to her. I don't believe in her, for all of her tears and fine words. Not speak English indeed!" came from Norah as she watched her.

Norah had stopped for awhile in Dresden where she had some relatives, and among them a cousin employed in a hotel where Jane Du Bois was also an employee. This girl, who could speak English, was very friendly with Norah, and when she heard she was from America made many inquiries about the country to which she had some thought of emigrating, and where, she said, she once had some relatives,—Smiths,—who lived in ——— Vermont. Did Norah know them?

"I knew a Julina Smith from that place years ago," Norah replied, whereupon it came out that Julina and Jane were second cousins, but had never met.

Jane had heard, though, of Julina's fine marriage with Monsieur Felix of Passy, and that she was now a grand lady, ignoring the few relatives she had left and living in great splendor until her husband died. Where she was now, Jane neither knew nor cared. Norah, too, was quite indifferent to the whereabouts of her former associate and never dreamed of finding her at Monte Carlo. She had met Jack on the piazza as he was returning for my fan, and the two were talking together when Madame passed on her way to the Casino. She was a woman to be noticed anywhere and Norah looked curiously and rather admiringly at her as she drew near. In Jack's mind there had always been a strong suspicion as to Madame's identity. Surely he had seen her before, and if so Norah might help him to solve the mystery. He was not, however, prepared for what followed when to her question "Who is that lady coming?" he replied "Madame Julie Felix. Do you know her?"

Madame was close to them and the moonlight shone full on her face and eyes, which flashed for a moment on Norah and were quickly withdrawn.

"I'd smile if I didn't know Julina Smith!" Norah exclaimed. "I heard she was Madame Felix and a great lady. Well, I'd of known them eyes in the dark."

"*Eureka!* I thought so," Jack said, hurrying in for the fan and making no further conversation with Norah with regard to Madame.

When left alone Norah was not quite so sure as she had been. "But I'll satisfy myself," she thought. "It would be like Julina to masquerade this way and not let them know who she was."

She accordingly went to the Casino and satisfied herself that Madame was Julina. Of her intimacy with Carl she knew nothing, or in her wrath she might have exposed her at the table. In her mind Julina was only passing as a great lady whom it would be her pleasure to unmask, which she did effectually.

"Madame Felix!" she repeated at intervals through the day. To think it should come true what she said about being rich, with diamonds, and a tail to her gown a yard long, and she not lettin' on who she was. We are well to be rid of her."

We all thought so, too, and breathed freer with the doors and windows of the Grand Villa closed, although I missed the excitement of watching its inmates and half wished we might have seen more of Julina.

CHAPTER VII.—ANNIE'S STORY CONTINUED.

CARL AND KATY.

CARL had been indignant at Norah when she first called out to Madame, but the moment he heard the name Julina Smith he felt, as he afterwards told Katy, as if a feather could have knocked him down. Everything connected with her, recurred to him and he knew it was Julina before she acknowledged it and came forward to meet us. I think she wanted to see him; but he did not join us, and he spent most of the day at the hotel in his room, seeing no one except Sam, who felicitated himself upon the fact that he had always mistrusted Madame.

"But I never thought of Julina,—the lyenist girl there was in town," he said;—"with airs enough to sink a ship. Why, she'd deceive the very elect."

This was to Carl, who made no reply. He was very sore on the subject of Madame, who had duped him so completely, and did not care to discuss her. That evening he dined with us, and was very quiet all through the dinner, during which no allusion was made to Madame. Katy and I had already talked her over by ourselves.

"I hated her at first," Katy said, "but when I saw her standing there so brave under the lash of Norah's tongue, telling us all about it, and knew how hard it must be for her to do it, I was sorry for her, and I forgave her everything, even to Carl. It was splendid in her to exonerate him as she did. Of course he was only her friend."

I was glad Katy took this view of it and watched eagerly for the denouement of the drama I felt sure was to

come. The day Madame left, Carl and Jack and Paul and Sam went on an excursion to the country and did not return until time for dinner. The night was cool for Monte Carlo, and after dinner we all gathered around the fire which had been kindled in the salon, except Katy, who was on the piazza with Carl. He had come from the hotel and was walking up and down with her in the moonlight, which was at its full that night, making the town almost as light as day. At last he came in for a warm cloak which he put around her and then made her sit down in a reclining chair adjusted to such an angle that when she leaned back in it, as she soon did, the moonlight fell upon her face, showing plainly every change in its expression as he talked to her. He had drawn another and lower chair to her side, and sitting down by her took one of her hands in his and held it while he went over every incident of his life which he thought at all crooked, and dwelling longest on his intimacy with Madame Felix, as that was the episode he most deplored and of which he was most ashamed.

"I cannot account for the influence she had over me," he said. "If I believed in mesmerism I should say it was that, but I don't. Consequently it must have been my own weakness and love of flattery, for she did flatter me and amuse me, and, fool that I was, I was really proud of her notice, believing in her blue blood and connection with the old aristocracy of which she so modestly hinted, and all the time she was Julina Smith and I didn't guess it. You don't know how I hate myself."

With her head thrown back on the chair rest,—and her eyes closed, Katy listened with the moonlight falling on her face, from whose expression Carl could form no conclusion as to her thoughts until, as he grew more and

more condemnatory of himself, she started up and with a girl's perversity began to defend Madame.

"I don't think her so bad," she said. "She liked you when you were a boy and wrote you a love-letter,—Annie has told me about it,—and you snubbed her awfully. Afterwards you met as equals and you were pleased with her, as you are with every handsome woman, and she is handsome if she does bleach her hair, and I am not certain but it improves her. It is certainly striking. She was kind to Paul and kind to you, and being French and full of intrigue it is natural that she would want to see if she could do with the man what she couldn't with the boy,—attract him. She succeeded because you thought her Madame Felix, with blue blood in her veins. She is no worse now that you know she is Julina Smith with Yankee blood instead of blue, and I don't think it a bit nice for you to throw stones at her after she exonerated you from everything as she did."

Katy had made her speech and lay back again in her chair with her eyes on Carl who had listened to her amazed, If she could thus excuse and defend Madame, would she not also overlook his own shortcomings. She had been very gracious to him since he came to Monte Carlo, and especially since Madame declared herself as Julina, and something in her eyes emboldened him to put his face down close to hers, while he poured out words of love which must be answered.

"Why don't you speak to me?" he said at last, and Katy replied, "How can I when you are stopping my mouth with kisses. Let me sit up, please."

Raising herself in her chair, and smoothing her hair which was a good deal tumbled, she said, "What about *my Career?* You saw me on the stage the other night.

Would you rather have seen me dead than there? Would you be willing to see me in more public places,—real opera houses,—if I were your wife? Wouldn't you mind being known only as my husband, waiting for me at home, or, worse yet, waiting for me behind the scenes, where pandemonium reigns and if there is anything bad in the actors it comes out? Would you like to read how divinely I sang or danced,—it might come to that, you know? And my picture would be in the shop windows and in the papers with the horrid cuts we sometimes see there. Do you love me well enough to stand all this?"

She was looking intently at him as she talked, and Carl writhed at the picture she drew of him as the husband of a prima donna. Was that frail young girl worth the humiliation he should be called upon to endure at times, if she persisted in her Career? Was his love for her strong enough to overbalance every thing? As Fanny once had weighed her love for Jack against money and position, so he now weighed his love for Katy against her Career, and Katy conquered.

"Yes, my darling," he said, drawing her face to him until it was hidden from the moonlight and nearly smothered on his bosom, "I love you so much that forty Careers shall not stand in my way, if you will take me. Sing in public if you want to, and I will wait at home, or in the green-room, or out doors, or anywhere, and when I hear the shouts of applause I shall comfort myself with thinking, 'Applaud her all you like, the more the better. You can't spoil her. To you she is the great singer, but she is *my wife!*'"

I wonder if Carl thought himself a hero when he said that. Katy did. Disengaging herself from him she lifted up her face which, either from the moonlight or the

pallor which had settled upon it, made Carl think that just so the faces of the glorified dead must look when entering Paradise.

"Carl," she said, and her lips quivered and the tears stood in her eyes, "I have heard you. Now, listen to me. I have dreamed so much of a Career, in which I know I should succeed and in which I should be comparatively happy. I like the excitement,—the sight of the people,—the applause,—the flowers,—and most of all I like to sing; but, Carl, I have learned that there is something better than all this, and that is love such as you offer me. Wait a minute,"—and she drew back as he was about to take her in his arms. "Hear me through before you squeeze my breath out of me again. You have conceded everything. Do you think I will accept the sacrifice and make no return? No, Carl. I am not ashamed to say that I love you so much that I am willing to give up my Career for you. If I didn't love you and should never marry it would be different; a married woman has no business on the stage unless her husband is there, too,—and I don't think you have the slightest aptitude for it. You could only sit in the audience or wait in the green-room, or if we traveled on our own hook, as the Hathern-Haverleigh troupe, you might take the money and tickets at the door. How would you like that?"

Carl did not reply, and she went on: "I don't want you at the door selling tickets, or in the green-room, or with the audience, or anywhere except with me, and I with you. Are you satisfied?"

Each had offered a great sacrifice to the other and there was perfect trust and love between them, and when the moon, which for a moment had been hidden by a cloud, came out again it shone on two faces so close to each other that they almost seemed but one.

"My darling, my darling!" was all Carl said, or had time to say, for the clock was striking twelve, and the people were swarming out of the Casino and coming, some of them, past our villa on their way home.

Jack had been asleep a long time, but I was awake and waiting for Katy, who, I feared, might take cold, sitting so long in the night air. Was there ever a girl cold, I wonder, from sitting with her lover? Katy surely was not, judging from her crimson cheeks and hot hands when I joined her in the hall. I heard her as she came up the stairs and stopped at my door, whispering very low, "Annie, Annie, are you awake?"

I knew what she wanted, and remembering how I had longed for some sympathetic ear to listen to my happiness when Jack proposed to me, I slipped on my dressing-gown and bed-shoes and went out to her.

"Oh, Annie," she began, as we sat down together. "I am so glad that I could not sleep till I had told some one. I am to give up all thought of the stage and marry Carl. I don't see why I have kept him off so long when I have always loved him since I fell into the duck pond, and he has loved me,—I am sure of it now,—no matter where he was, or with whom; there was never a moment that his heart was not ready to open for me if I would come into it. He said so, and I believe it. I know the worst there is to know, and it is not bad for a young man like him. A little fickle, with escapades and flirtations which meant nothing, because he always saw my face everywhere and it kept him from falling. He said so. And then,—Julina! He takes that most to heart because he was so deceived, and he really was pleased with her. He said so. And I don't care. She's a handsome woman, who knows just how to make a young man like her.

And I don't blame her much either. He snubbed her awfully when he was a boy, and when she met him on equal terms it was natural that she, being French and steeped in art, should try to be even with him. I hated her at first, but when she stood up before us and confessed I forgave her everything. Paul likes her and she likes him. There must be something good about her, but she can never move Carl again. He said so."

Katy's "He said so" was very frequent, showing how implicit was her faith in Carl, and because *he said so* there could be no appeal. For an hour we talked, or rather Katy did, while I sat in a huddle trying to follow her and keep warm. Then as the clock struck one there came two peremptory calls from either end of the hall,—one from Miss Errington for Katy, and one from Jack for me. I think Katy would willingly have sat up all night telling what *he said*, but Jack's assertion that unless I came at once he was coming for me, broke up the conference, until after breakfast, when Carl came to be congratulated and accepted as Katy's promised husband.

Chapter VIII.—Annie's Story Continued.

CONCLUSION.

It was a happy winter we spent in Florence and Rome and Sorrento, going in the early spring to Venice and the Lakes, and later on to Paris. Here there were four delightful weeks, and I wanted to stay longer, but Carl hurried us on to London, where he was to be married. We all urged him to wait until we were home at The Elms, but he said No,—he had waited long enough; and so one

morning in early June there was a very quiet wedding in ——— church, with only a few personal friends present, and Katy was Mrs. Carl Haverleigh. There was a wedding breakfast at the Grand, where we were stopping, and where on our return from church we found a letter and package from Julina,—now the Countess de Varré! Fortune had favored her again. The brother-in-law had died and left her a good share of the money he had taken from her. The chateau at Passy was hers once more, where she was living with the Count and very happy, as a titled lady. Accompanying her letter was an individual tea set of exquisite china, with gold lined spoons and sugar tongs and silver tray,—her wedding gift to Katy and Carl conjointly, with a hope that sometimes when they were using it they would think of one who was not so bad as to American eyes she might seem to be. Katy was pleased, but Carl did not express himself, and I do not think he has ever yet taken a cup of tea from the pretty set which stands on Katy's little tea-table in Boston and is greatly admired.

It was the middle of July when we reached New York and found Fanny waiting for us on the dock, and insisting upon our going with her to the cottage she had rented at Newport. It was too hot for either Virginia or Washington, she said, and she carried her point so far as Carl and Katy and Miss Errington were concerned. Jack said he must go home to his business, and I, of course, went with him, taking Paul, who was beginning to droop with travel and excitement. It was a lovely summer day when we drove up the avenue to our home, where Phyllis and many of our neighbors greeted us with a warmth which told us that nowhere in the world were there truer friends than in Lovering.

"And nowhere so pleasant a home," I said, as I went all over the house, happy as a child to be back again among the Virginia hills with her blue sky over my head and the breath of the woods and pines upon my cheek.

It was better than Newport, where Katy was a great belle and where Fan had more than one offer of marriage, which she promptly declined. She was on the best of terms with her sister-in-law, and when the season was over the two went together to the house in Washington. Carl and Katy came to us and staid all through the autumn and were joined at Thanksgiving by Fan and Miss Errington. What a day that was,—and dinner, too, which Phyllis thought she superintended, although the real head was Norah, who had come with Katy, but who for once was careful of the old negress' feelings and humored her fancies.

Towards the close of dinner Katy said, "We have no wine, but water will do as well. Let us drink to the health of the Countess de Varré."

"Good," Carl said, and we drank to her health and amused ourselves with reminiscences of her when she was Julina Smith and served us as our maid.

Phyllis had received the news of her advancement with a snort and a dangerous topple of her turban. She had never liked the girl, and when, as she chanced to be in the room, we drank her health, she exclaimed, "Oh, my Lord, my Lord! Ef I couldn't drink suffin better'n July, I'd go dry a spell."

It is many years since that day and many more since most of the incidents of this story took place. Jack and I are quite old people now, or the younger generation think us so. I am forty-seven, and have a double chin. Jack calls me a roly-poly, while a boy, who stands six feet

and has eyes like Jack, says I waddle like a duck when I walk, but am the sweetest and jolliest little mother in the world. Jack is fifty-three and getting grey and stout, and is a fine type of the well-conditioned southern gentleman, —not too much pressed with business, but still with enough to do. He has been to Congress twice and there is talk of sending him as a State Senator next year. One winter we took a house in Washington, and I staid there with Jack and saw all I ever care to see of fashionable society. Fanny was on the top wave, and as Katy was with us a part of the time we were made much of and went everywhere,—sometimes to three different places in one night, and by the close of the long term I was quite worn out and glad to get back to the old home under The Elms, with only Phyllis and a bright mulatto girl to look after instead of the crew I had in Washinton, who stole my handkerchiefs and collars and Jack's socks and wore my black silk dress to one of their carousals, and who always hoped to die if they had done anything of the sort when charged with the offense.

The tall boy, with eyes like Jack, is our first-born,— our son Hathern, who is nearly seventeen, and preparing for Yale. My choice is for some other college, but only Yale will suit him and we have yielded, his father telling him, however, that if he thought to join in all the sports which have sometimes made the students of Yale a by-word as well as a terror to the towns they visited, he would be mistaken, as he had no money to spend that way,—" and without money," he added, " you can't be *in it.*"

Hathern, who is a splendid specimen of young manhood and fond of athletic sports of all kinds, looked rather blue until Fan came from Washington and he took her for a

drive. That night he confided to his sisters that aunt Fan was a brick! That he intended to stand well in all his classes and with his teachers and to be graduated with honor, and never drink a drop of anything stronger than water, *but*—he was also going to be *in it;* and with the enthusiasm of a girlhood which sees more to admire in an athlete than in a student, the sisters agreed that Aunt Fan *was* a brick,—that the cold water and standing well in classes and graduating with honor was all right, but the athletics were more fun, and it was worth some knocks and scratches and bruises, and even a broken bone now and then, to be *in it.*

These girls, who are fourteen, are twins, named Fan and Ann, and very much like the originals, except that Fan is not quite as handsome or as tall as her aunt, and Ann is taller and handsomer than her mother. Otherwise, they are much like the girls introduced in the first chapter of this story, and often, when I see them flitting through the house and grounds, doing the things Fan and I used to do,—saying the things we used to say, in voices much like ours,—the years of my life roll back and I am young as they are, with as little care or thought for the future. Then Jack comes in and calls me Annie-mother, a name he resumed the day he brought Hathern to me and said, "Would you like to see our boy:" and I am myself again,—a matron-mother of forty-seven, but feeling scarcely older than when I was a girl like my Fan and Ann.

Fanny, as I call her now, to distinguish her from my daughter, is a beautiful woman still, and she knows it and the world knows it, and had she chosen she might have married a General or a Judge or an ex-Governor, or have used her large fortune to build up the impoverished estate

of an Englishman with a title. But she would have none of them. "I am very happy as I am," she says, and I think she is. She is more quiet and dignified than she used to be and strangers call her proud. But to me she is the same Fan as ever,—a part of myself,—while to Jack I think she is really a sister whom he honors and consults in some matters more than he does me. She comes and goes as she pleases. Is sometimes in Washington,—sometimes in Newport, sometimes in Florida, where the Hathern villa is a reality, sometimes at The Plateau,—and once she spent eighteen months in Europe with Paul, whom, in a way, she has adopted. He is now twenty-seven, with a refined, delicate face and an air of languor about him caused by his weak back, which has always troubled him more or less. He is a graduate of Yale, and when Hathern decided to go there he began to question him as to what he did, but soon gave it up, saying Paul was no good. He didn't know about anything but rules and books and professors and wasn't *in it* at all! When he chooses he stops with us, or with Katy, but is most with Fanny, who needs him more than we do. "Our room" at The Plateau has been given to him and fitted up as a kind of study, or den, where he spends a great deal of his time with his books. He is something of a scientist and goes into every *ism* and *ology* and *osophy* of the day. Just now he has taken up microbes and is studying their habits, if they have any, and he writes long articles for Reviews, in which he tries to interest Fan and Hathern and the twins, and sometimes myself, but generally fails, as they are too deep for us.

There is one, however, who always listens and applauds, although it is doubtful whether he understands a word, and that is Sam Slayton, Fan's factotum, who takes care

of The Plateau when she is there and takes care of it when she is not, and makes more at it than he did in his grocery. He has never married again, but every year he goes to Vermont to visit Mirandy's grave and mourn. During the mourning he wears a tall hat with a band of crape around it, and on his return to The Plateau puts it away carefully until the period comes again. As it is the hat he wore on his wedding trip it is somewhat out of date, but he does not mind it and felt greatly insulted when last winter some one wanted to borrow it for Uriah Heep to wear at a Dickens Carnival given for the Y. M. C. A.'s in Lovering.

Miss Errington is often with us. The twins call her Aunt Cornie, and think almost as much of her as of their stately Aunt Fanny. Some meddling person has told them of that chapter in Fan's life and their father's which was almost a tragedy and I do not think they have quite forgiven her for her part in it, although each has said to me that she would rather have me for her mother than Auntie Fan, who is so grand and cold. Fan has made her will and left her money to Paul and my children, with a proviso for Katy's should any be born to her. As yet Carl and Katy are childless, but very, very happy with each other. They travel a great deal and when at home their handsome new house on Commonwealth Avenue in Boston is usually filled with guests and Katy makes a charming hostess and Carl a delightful host. In most respects he is the same genial, handsome Carl we knew as a boy, with something about him which makes everyone his friend. He still admires a pretty face when he sees it, and discusses its points with Katy, but always winds up by saying, "But by Jove, she can't hold a candle to you, the most beautiful woman I ever saw, and the older you grow the handsomer you are."

I think Carl is right, and that, if possible, Katy is lovelier in her maturity than when she was a girl. Paul worships her; Hathern worships her; the twins worship her; we all worship her, and yet she is not spoiled. She was a sweet, unselfish, loving child, and is a loving, unselfish woman. If she has ever regretted the Career she gave up for Carl, she has made no sign, and seems to find her greatest happiness with him. Occasionally, when she is in Lovering she sings in our pretty Concert Hall and everybody comes to hear her, but never have I heard her sing as she sang at Monte Carlo, or seen upon her face the expression I saw there after she knew Carl was in the audience listening to her. Now, when she sings in Lovering he is to all intents and purposes stage manager, adjusting the lights and the piano, and the curtain, and then sitting behind the scenes and applauding her with the rest. Once when she seemed to have excelled herself and the hall rang like the salon in Monte Carlo, he said to her after it was over, "Upon my soul, Katy, I believe you'd have made your mark if you had gone on with your Career. How would you like to begin it now?"

For an instant there was a look on Katy's face which made me think of a war-horse scenting the battle. Then it faded and she shook her head saying, "Too late, my voice will crack pretty soon,—or *wobble* as Hathern says old Mrs. Mosier's does when she tries to sing high. I am content as I am and perfectly happy with you." What answer Carl made I do not know, for I discreetly left the room just as he took her in his arms. Carl is rather demonstrative, and the twins say that if Katy could have been squeezed and kissed to death she would have died long ago. Norah runs the house in Commonwealth Avenue and runs Carl and Katy, too; but as she allows

them a good many privileges, and is wholly faithful to their interests, they do not mind it, and in most matters let her have her way.

Phyllis is very old,—how old she does not know,—but she is wholly disabled from taking charge of the kitchen, where a younger woman is installed as cook, with Phyllis as nominal superintendent. Only in this way can I hope for peace. The instructions which Norah left so many years ago have been found and tacked up over the sink, and are held up as iron rules to the patient, much enduring Sarah, who says, "I 'specs we mus' let the ole woman have her way, or think she has it; but, Lord bless you, I has to cheat her. I can read writin' an' she can't, an' I reads it wrong a heap o'times, an' when she gits too high I done tell her I'm follerin' Norah O'Rock's 'structions, an' she comes down like a lam'. I knows how to manage her."

The house under The Elms has been enlarged and improved and is, I think, an ideal country home, although Hathern and the twins would like a square hall and a tower and many projections here and there, and porcelain bath-tubs and electric lights,—and a big fortune to keep it all up, their father says, his solid sense always coming to the front when the young blood gets rampant. Hathern has his horse and wheel, and the twins have each her riding pony,—presents from Fan, who usually gives them what they want, if it is feasible and proper. Black Beauty died years ago and was buried in the woods behind The Plateau, with Fan and Paul as mourners.

And now the story winds to a close. It was commenced in June, the month of roses, when the south wind blew softly through the doors of the wide hall, and on the lawn outside there was the sound of young voices in the

tennis court, where Paul and Hathern and the twins were playing. Jack was away on business, and Phyllis was sitting under the dogwood tree watching the play and sympathizing equally with both sides. She is sitting there now asleep in the sunshine, but the tennis court is silent and the twins' ponies and Hathern's horse stand in the lane with their noses on the gate looking towards the house as if asking why they are not taking their usual canter through the woods or over the smooth turnpike. Jack is again away on business as he was a year ago, and I am alone, for Fanny and Carl and Katy, who are here, have gone with the young people to the town hall, which is filled with flowers and ferns and evergreens. It is Memorial Day, when, north and south, east and west, the graves of our soldiers will be decorated by the loving hands of many who were not born until after the war and to whom that time is only a dark page of history nearly blotted out.

Others there are, however, whose hearts will ache with the old pain as they think of the loved ones who, whether their cause were right or wrong, gave their lives for it and died on the battlefield. Boxes of rare flowers, ordered by Fanny, have come from Washington, and few graves will be more beautiful than the two where Charlie and The Boy are lying. Hathern and the twins have taken the Stars and Stripes and the Stars and Bars from the faded uniforms of grey and blue, where they have hung so long, and carried them to the little cemetery across the field. From where I sit I can see them side by side waving in the breeze and occasionally touching each other as if in friendly greeting. Through the open doors of the wide hall where I am writing the wind blows in and the wind blows out as it did a year ago, breathing of

peace in the land. In the distance I hear the sound of martial music, and know that the procession has formed and will soon be marching down the street, and I wonder if I shall have time to finish my story before it passes The Elms. With the first beat of the drum Phyllis rouses from her sleep under the dogwood tree, and coming to me says, "It seems mighty like de wah, but thank God dat is over and gone."

The procession is in sight. Hathern is carrying the tattered flag, and Paul is walking by his side, laden with flowers. They have stopped opposite the hillside cemetery. They are decorating the graves of Charlie and The Boy. My eyes are full of tears, and I cannot write any more.

THE END.

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